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BUYER'S GUIDES

CHOOSE THE TYPE OF KNIFE YOU NEED

32 EDC

A knife that you carry every day must be lightweight and sized to carry easily so that you're not tempted to leave it home. And it must be versatile too, because you never know what task you might need it to perform.

42 SURVIVAL, BUSHCRAFT

Survival and bushcraft are all about living with minimal gear. The knives you choose are critical tools because they allow you to improvise other things you need from the resources you're able to gather in your environment.

54 FOOD PREP

One of the most enjoyable things is to sit down to a tasty meal you made yourself in your own camp or kitchen. Knives used for food prep must be configured for the ingredients you're processing, and they must be very sharp.

60 TACTICAL

A knife carried for self-defense is different in that it's one you might carry often, but hope you never have to use. But if you do have to use it, it just might save your life. As with any self-defense tool, proper training is critical.

70 HUNTING & FISHING

In the field or on the water, knives for hunting and fishing are often called upon to do more than field-dress a deer or clean a fish. Often more robust, these knives are the everyday carry blades of the outdoor world.

78 BUDGET

Shop around and you can still find good quality knives that are reasonably priced. Do your homework so that you can tell the difference between one that's a waste of money and one that's a real value.

86 ACCESSORIES

You don't live by knives alone. You need sharpeners to keep your knife edges like new. Add other accessories too, such as survival gear and carry bags, and you're well on your way to being prepared for your next adventure.

92 MULTITOOLS

A tiny toolbox you carry in your pocket or on your belt, a multitool can help you to make quick repairs yourself. Tighten a screw, strip a wire, file a rough edge, open a bottle or can, multitools can get the job done.

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On the Cover: Knives shown in main image are Condor Mountain Pass Axe (left), Boker Plus Kwaiken Air Cocobolo (top, right) and Spartan Blades Spartan-Ronin Shoto

Cover Photo: By Larry Atil; **Cover Design:** Jacqui Dawson

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DEPARTMENT

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THE CANDY STORE IS OPEN

WELCOME TO THE 2022 ISSUE OF THE ANNUAL KNIVES ILLUSTRATED BUYER'S GUIDE.

We hope you enjoy looking at all these knives and making mental notes of the ones you'd like to own. I was like the proverbial kid in a candy store while helping to put this together. This is technically our January/February issue, but because it actually comes out before Christmas, you still have time to open the magazine to the page of your choice and leave it where someone might coincidentally, but conveniently, take notice of it or even accidentally trip over it.

And if that special someone thinks you've been less naughty than nice, just maybe you'll have that solid little rectangular package waiting for you under the Christmas tree that you know from experience must be a new knife. Knives in boxes are the best. Some knives come in thick plastic packaging and you need a knife to open your new knife. How crazy is that? And if you're reading this just after celebrating Hanukkah, which came early this year, maybe you can parlay some sort of gift exchange deal to get the blades you really want.

If all else fails, it's time to tap into that philosophy that's so popular today that intends to prop up your self-esteem by insisting that, "you are important too," "you need to take time for you," "you are special in your own way," and "you need to treat yourself sometimes." Following that line of thought, in this season of giving, it's totally permissible to buy a knife or two, maybe more, for yourself. After all, "you owe it to yourself." All the self-help counselors say so.

Ideally, yes, we shouldn't be materialistic. It is more blessed to give than to receive. This year, I think I'll give a knife—one that I'll pick out myself—to one of my grandsons. Being that he'll be only 6 months old this year, I am willing to hold the knife in trust for him until he reaches an age of responsibility.

In the next 10 years or so, he'll probably be more mesmerized by video games and have no interest in knives. A bit later, he won't be ready because, of course, teenagers can't be held responsible for any of their actions, we're told. They're brains aren't fully developed. So, I figure I'll have to be patient and hold on to the knife for the next 20 to 30 years, periodically testing it to make



sure it still works by cutting rope, opening packages, shaving tinder, field-dressing deer, things like that.

In any case, I hope you enjoy this issue. We've presented things a bit differently this year. We've changed some of the categories and added what we call Rapid Reviews, one-page quick reads on particular knives—one in each of the knife categories—to give you a bit more information than just the model name and price.

From all of us at Knives Illustrated, we wish you a very happy New Year. And please, don't let the coming year be a one-way conversation. Tell us what you like, what you don't and what you'd like to see in our pages in the year ahead.

Steven Paul Barlow, Editor
sbarlow@engaged.media

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THE IMPORTANCE

CHOOSE A
BLADE SHAPE ...

7150 KAI
MADE IN USA
DISKIN DESIGN

Consider how
you intend to use
a knife when
choosing a
blade profile.

Emerson Pet. #5.876.500

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of three knives resting on a dark, heavily textured workbench. In the upper left, a portion of a knife with a curved blade and a black handle is visible. In the center, a large, straight knife with a serrated spine and a red handle lies horizontally. Its blade is engraved with a bison logo and the text 'WHITE RIVER S35VN USA'. In the lower left, another knife with a curved blade is partially visible.

OF PROFILING

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JIM COBB

**... THAT FITS THE WORK
TO BE DONE**

**“...AT THE END OF THE DAY
WHAT MATTERS IS WHETHER
THE KNIFE WILL PERFORM
ITS JOB WELL.”**

From the time the first caveman realized a chipped bit of obsidian could be used to remove skin and meat from animals they harvested, humans have sought to improve on the basic design of that sharp edge.

For some collectors, the shape of the blade, often called the blade's profile, is primarily a matter of aesthetics. They might purchase a specific knife simply because they don't have a hawkbill or trailing-point knife in their collection yet. And there's absolutely nothing wrong with that approach in the least.

Others, though, buy a knife because it is designed to tackle a certain task or range of chores efficiently and effectively. This is largely determined by the profile of the blade.

Once you strip away all the fun stuff, such as exotic handle scales and intricately detailed sheath designs, at the end of the day what matters is whether the knife will perform its job well. Thus, it is important to understand what various profiles are designed to do most effectively.

Let's take a look at some of the most common blade profiles and the types of jobs in which they truly excel.

STRAIGHT BACK

This is about as simple as it gets when it comes to knife design. The spine is straight, or very nearly so, while the edge curves up to meet it at the blade's tip. This style of knife is great for chopping as well as cutting. Often, the spine is fairly thick, which works well for those who like to baton their firewood or use their free hand to apply additional pressure to make a push cut. However, there is a tendency for some makers to go overboard with this, resulting in what amounts to a sharpened crowbar.

1

DROP POINT

This is one of the most popular blade profiles on the market today, and for good reason. It will do just about anything reasonably well. The spine extends straight out from the handle, then dips down to meet the sharpened edge. While it has been around for a long time, it was celebrated knifemaker Bob Loveless who really popularized it, beginning in the 1950s, and that popularity has continued through today. The design offers a strong tip while keeping it easy to control. Because the tip drops down below the spine, there is less chance of puncturing anything you don't want to when butchering or field dressing game.

2

CLIP POINT

When you hear someone talk about a Bowie knife, this is typically the blade shape they're describing. The blade looks as though a portion of it was removed, or clipped, from the spine just behind the tip. Often, this runs for about a third of the total blade length. This area of the blade may or may not be sharpened. Either way, this design results in a needle-sharp point that is excellent for penetration while the edge has plenty of belly for slicing.

3

The Bravo 1.5 from Bark River Knives is an example of a straight-back blade.

1

An example of a drop-point blade is this Model 1 from White River Knife & Tool.

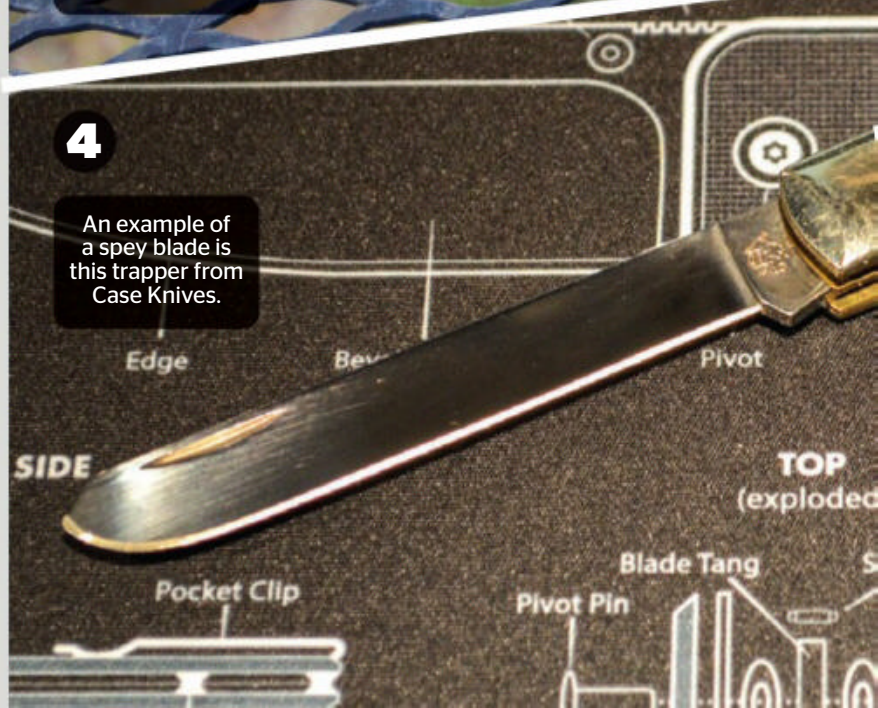
2

3

This Model 110 from Buck Knives is an example of a clip point blade.

4

An example of a spey blade is this trapper from Case Knives.

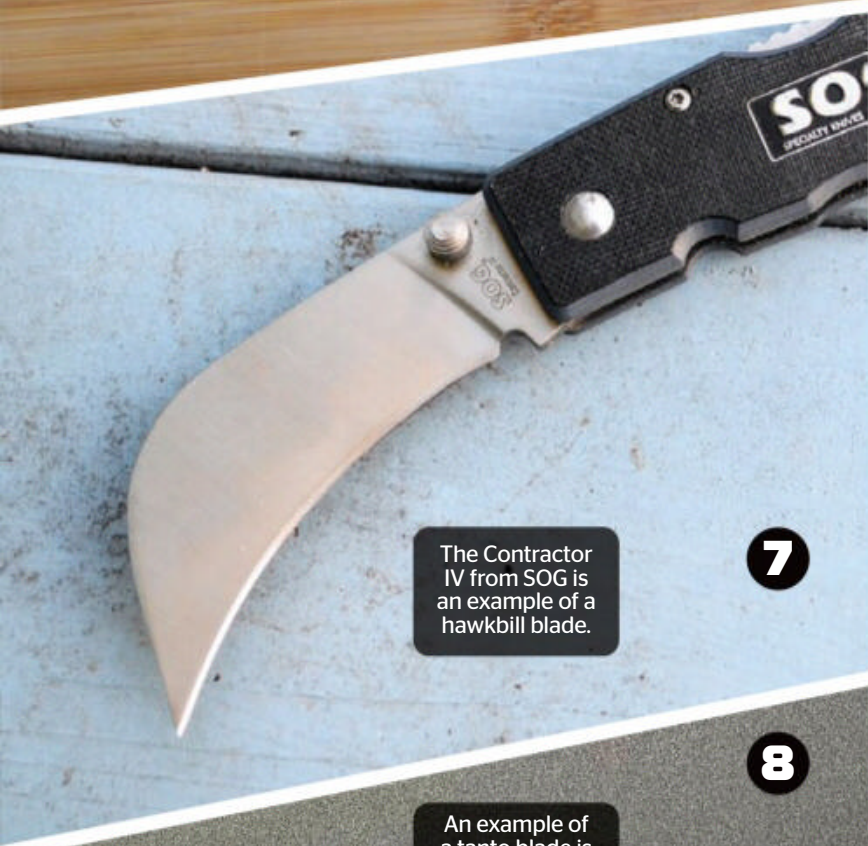




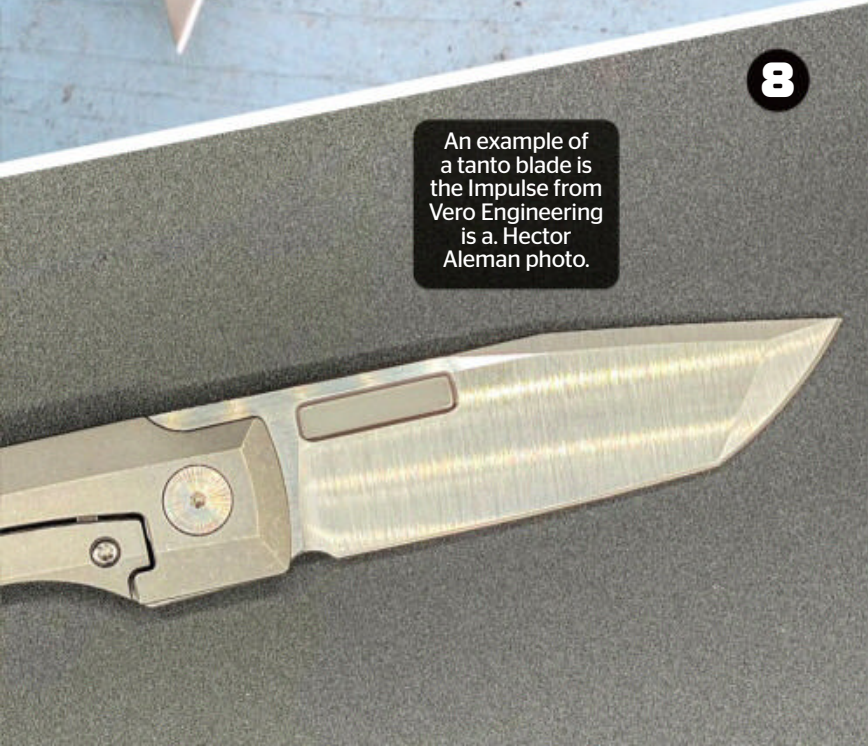
An example of a spear blade is this Launch 8 from Kershaw Knives.



The Meatcrafter from Benchmade Knives is an example of a trailing-point blade.



The Contractor IV from SOG is an example of a hawkbill blade.



An example of a tanto blade is the Impulse from Vero Engineering is a Hector Aleman photo.

SPEY

Seen almost exclusively on folding knives, this is an old design that might be sort of a kissing cousin to the clip point. As the spine nears the blade's tip, it dips down at a dramatic angle to meet the edge as it curves upward. As a practical matter, this means the point isn't likely to accidentally penetrate anything as you work. Originally, this style was designed for use in neutering animals around the homestead. Today, you find them mostly on two- or three-bladed folding knives.

SPEAR POINT

Some people call this profile a dagger, which is a fair statement and is what most folks would probably think of when they see this shape. The top and bottom of the blade go straight from the handle, and then curve to meet each other at the center. Traditionally, both edges are sharpened, though that's not always the case. Some models will leave the top edge unsharpened so the knife can be legally carried. This knife has one primary purpose and that's combat. It is designed for stabbing and thrusting. Thus, you'll see this on a tactical knife far more often than on something intended for field work.

TRAILING POINT

This style of knife is suited particularly well for food prep, such as processing fish and small game. Both the spine and the edge curve upward at the end. This produces a long, sweeping belly that terminates in a very sharp point. Long, even slices are the hallmark of a trailing point knife. They are also sometimes seen in slashing weapons.

"...ALL KNIVES ARE MADE TO CUT AND MOST OF THEM CAN PERFORM A WIDE RANGE OF TASKS IN A PINCH. HOWEVER...IT IS ALWAYS BEST TO USE THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB."

HAWKBILL

Where the trailing point curves up, the hawkbill curves down, with a concave shape to the blade. It looks more than a little like a claw or talon. As you pull the knife across the material being cut, the blade bites deeply. We see this sort of blade profile on some garden implements as well as shop tools, such as for cutting carpet. However, due to how well the blade shape cuts, this is also a somewhat popular choice for defense weapons.

TANTO

Owing to the advertising blitz from a certain company back in the 1980s, the tanto became a very popular blade style among the tactical set. Demonstrations of the knife going through car doors and other objects illustrated the power of the tanto's point. This Americanized version of the traditional design features the blade's edge turning upward at a sharp angle to the spine. While this certainly lends a great amount of strength to the tip, it also makes the blade difficult for some to sharpen.

SHEEPSFOOT

9

Once upon a time, this was a knife styled for trimming hooves, hence the name. It features a straight edge and straight spine that meet at an unsharpened tip. The idea was to be able to hold the knife's blade and use it without worrying about getting stabbed by the point. Today, we see this style on any number of knives intended for first responders and other rescue workers. The reason is that it can be used to cut seat belts and such without having to worry about accidentally penetrating the victim's body parts.

This Spyderco Rescue 79 mm from Spyderco is an example of a sheepfoot blade.



9

10

REVERSE S

Perhaps most often seen in the Spyderco line, this blade profile has but one use, and that's to slice and slash an opponent in a defense situation. You're not using this to break down cardboard boxes at work, nor are you likely to find a use for it in the kitchen. The design packs more cutting edge into the blade than just about any other knife profile, due to the sweeping curves. A friend's daughter refers to this type of knife as "Mister Nasty" and she isn't wrong.

10

The Matriarch 2 from Spyderco is an example of a reverse S blade.



THE RIGHT TOOL

At the end of the day, all knives are made to cut and most of them can perform a wide range of tasks in a pinch. However, if you have the luxury of doing so, it is always best to use the right tool for the job. This means not trying to carve a figure-four trap trigger with a knife that's designed primarily for food prep, for example. It is sort of like emptying your 401k account to buy lottery tickets. Just because you can do something, doesn't make it a good idea.

CHISEL BLADE

Technically, this is more of a grind than it is a blade profile, but it straddles the line close enough to be included here. One side of the blade is flat, the other is sharpened. As the name may suggest, it excels with woodworking, though you can find some kitchen knives with this edge. There are also a few tactical-oriented knives with this sort of blade profile.

The example shown here is a kiridashi made by Bright Forest Forge in central Wisconsin. This is a Japanese design and an all-purpose utility knife used for everything from sharpening pencils in school to crafting with bamboo. **KIBG**

This kiridashi made by Bright Forest Forge is an example of a chisel blade.



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PACKING STEEL

HOW WILL YOU CARRY THE NEXT KNIFE YOU BUY?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JIM COBB

IT IS SAID THAT THE BEST KNIFE IS THE ONE YOU HAVE WITH YOU WHEN YOU NEED IT. After all, if it is sitting in a case at home, it won't be of much help when you're two days into a five-day hiking trip. Yet, at the same time, when it comes to shopping for a knife, often we're far more concerned with the blade steel and handle material than we are about how we're actually going to carry it with us. While some models might incorporate more than one of them into the design, there are four materials that are typically used for knife sheaths.

The background of the entire page is a detailed, aged map with handwritten text in various languages, including "Zona frigida ex parte polare". Overlaid on this map are several knife sheaths and knives. In the upper left, there's a bright orange sheath with a black handle. Below it is a black sheath with a silver blade. A large, dark blue/black sheath with a silver blade and a black handle is prominently displayed in the center. To its right is a black sheath with a black handle. In the lower right, there's a black sheath with a black handle. The text "Knife sheaths can vary greatly in both style and material. Make sure your knife has a sheath that suits your purposes." is enclosed in a black circle with a white border, positioned over the large blue/black sheath.

Knife sheaths can vary greatly in both style and material. Make sure your knife has a sheath that suits your purposes.

"HOW YOU CARRY A KNIFE IS A PERSONAL DECISION AND SHOULD BE BASED ON THE TYPE OF KNIFE YOU NEED AS WELL AS THE TYPE OF WORK YOU'LL BE PERFORMING."

LEATHER

By far the most traditional of the options, it is also the one most likely to be decorated, if that's something of interest to you. Whether gussied up or not, leather typically ages beautifully, with a little care. It is sturdy and can be repaired in the field with minimal supplies.

Most leather sheaths are either a pouch style, where the knife sits deep inside with just a few inches of handle exposed, or it will be equipped with some sort of strap that secures the handle, which is mostly or entirely exposed with just the blade itself resting inside the sheath.

There are a couple of downsides to leather. It retains moisture, which it can then hold against your knife, causing rust. If the leather isn't treated properly, it will degrade over time, especially if exposed to moisture or sunlight for long periods of time. This can be mitigated by applying an aftermarket leather protection product.

KYDEX

This is a very popular option, particularly for those who prefer a more tactical look and feel to their sheaths. Kydex is an extremely durable thermoplastic that's been used for knife sheaths for a several decades now. It starts as a sheet that is then heated and formed. Quite often, when the knife is inserted into the sheath, it makes a distinctive clicking noise, assuring you that the knife is secure.

Kydex is waterproof and requires virtually no maintenance other than wiping it clean from time to time. It is largely unaffected by temperatures typically experienced by most people. Many Kydex sheaths will also have several attachment points, places where you can run some cordage through to tie the sheath to a pack strap or other location, if desired.

The biggest drawback is that these sheaths can dull the knife's edge. Over time, pulling the knife out and pushing it back in, with the edge rubbing back and forth against the



This is a fairly standard leather sheath with a retaining strap. It also features a large belt loop. Shown is a Fox River EXT-1 from Bark River Knives.



A simple Kydex sheath. Notice how the material is formed around the knife blade. Shown is an M1 from White River Knife & Tool.



Plastic sheaths are generally plain and inexpensive. Some are equipped with a drain hole (inset, right), to release condensation and moisture. Shown in both photos is a Companion from Morakniv.



The black nylon sheath here is subdued, but durable. Shown is a Harsey Tactical Trout from Spartan Blades.

material, you may find you need to touch up the blade a little more often. If the fit isn't exactly right, the blade may also end up scratched here or there by the sheath. For some, that's a deal breaker and for others it might be no big deal.

PLASTIC

While the material is fairly similar to Kydex, this deserves a separate category due to the construction method. Where Kydex is formed around the knife, other plastic sheaths are injection molded and use a softer, more flexible material. It isn't wimpy, not by any stretch, but it isn't as bombproof as Kydex. They also aren't as expensive to produce as Kydex sheaths, resulting in a lower overall price point.

Being plastic, the sheaths are waterproof. Many of them are equipped with drain holes at the bottom to release condensation or moisture that might be present on the knife. They are durable, but can be negatively affected by long-term exposure to UV radiation.

NYLON

This one sometimes gets a bad rap, but it is definitely a workable option. Nylon is plastic that has been formed into threads that are woven into a fabric-like material. It is strong and weather-resistant, making it a good option for outdoor gear like knife sheaths.

It is also relatively inexpensive compared to leather while offering similar qualities of flexibility and durability, albeit with a more tactical look. However, it can fray if the knife's edge nicks it. But, many nylon sheaths include a hard plastic insert to prevent that from happening.

FIXED BLADE CARRY OPTIONS

The style of sheath will typically dictate the carry options available. Naturally, you can contract with a custom maker who can craft the perfect design for your wants and needs. But if you're looking to limit your expense, then take the stock sheath into consideration when making the initial purchase.

By far, the most common way to carry a knife is on the waist with the tip pointed down. Worn with the knife over the hip, the blade remains within easy reach. Depending on the knife size, some may prefer a sheath that keeps the end of the handle near the beltline for comfort. You can go a step further and incorporate a dangler, which drops the knife down to the thigh. This is particularly good when carrying a larger knife, though it can bounce around a bit as you move.

Often called scout carry, having the knife stored horizontally on the belt,



A dangler works great for large blades, keeping them accessible but not uncomfortable. Shown is an El Chete from TOPS Knives.

usually at the small of the back, is excellent for concealment. It should go without saying that the sheath must be exceptionally secure or you might lose the knife without even realizing it. There is also a bit of a learning curve to replacing the knife in the sheath properly.

Neck sheaths work well for freeing up space on your belt, though they are best for smaller knives. Some may find them distracting, due to their movement as you walk. Keeping the knife under your shirt will reduce this tendency, but that can also expose the knife or sheath to your sweat. If you go with this sort of carry, some suggest using a breakaway cord so you don't accidentally strangle yourself in an accident.

If you're planning to spend a considerable amount of time hiking each day, keeping the knife on a pack strap might be a workable option. It keeps the knife within easy reach without weighing down your belt. However, it also means that if you set the pack down and walk away, you're leaving your knife behind, which isn't ideal.

If the fixed blade knife is small enough for pocket carry, consider a static line option. This is where you basically tie the sheath to your belt with a length of cordage. It should be long enough to allow the sheath to rest comfortably in your pocket. But, when you need to deploy the knife, you just pull the handle from your pocket with a bit of force. When the cordage gets taut, it holds the sheath secure as the knife slips free. The sheath will then dangle at the end of the cord until you replace it in your pocket.

FOLDING KNIFE CARRY OPTIONS

They're called pocketknives for a reason, right? Most folding knives are carried in a pants pocket. However, even there we have a few options to consider.

The most common carry feature on folding knives these days is

This basic pouch style leather sheath keeps the knife secure but riding low on the belt line. Shown is a Lapwing from Nordsmith Knives.



Some sheaths are equipped with a removeable dangler, giving you the option of carrying the knife directly on the belt or not. Shown is a GNS from LT Wright Handcrafted Knives.



While most Kydex sheaths are plain, some makers will add a stamp or similar decorative marks. Shown is the Attleboro from Attleboro Knives.



“A CARRY SYSTEM THAT’S AWKWARD OR UNCOMFORTABLE WILL JUST END UP BEING LEFT AT HOME, MEANING YOU WON’T HAVE THE KNIFE WITH YOU WHEN YOU NEED IT.”

a pocket clip. They come in two basic styles—regular and deep carry. A regular style clip secures the knife to the pocket. But, the knife is somewhat visible, sticking up a half-inch or so from the top of the pocket material. A deep-carry clip keeps the knife farther into the pocket, so it is hardly noticeable. While in both cases the clip itself is obviously exposed to view, they are usually dark-colored, which works well unless you’re wearing khaki pants.

There is also what’s called a mini deep-carry clip, which shortens the clip itself to about half the length of a standard one. This helps with the concealment factor. With some knives, the pocket clip position can be changed, so you can choose between tip-up or tip-down as well as right- or left-hand carry.

Some folding knives, such as the classic Buck 110, come complete with a belt pouch. This works particularly well if you use your folding knife a lot throughout the day, saving you from digging through your pocket all the time. There are also slip-styled sheaths in both leather or Kydex for folders on the market. However, with all of these, it is a visible carry and thus might be frowned upon in some locales.

Of course, many folding knives are unadorned with pocket clips and are just tossed into the pocket, such as the classic Swiss Army Knife. Smaller ones might be attached to keychains, but using such a knife for anything beyond slicing open a box can get awkward if you have more than a couple of keys with it.

How you carry a knife is a personal decision and should be based on the type of knife you need as well as the type of work you’ll be performing. A knife carried primarily



Here’s the difference between a standard pocket clip (shown on a Rescue 79 mm from Spyderco, top) and a deep-carry clip (on a ZT 0707 from Zero Tolerance Knives, bottom).



Notice the difference between the same standard pocket clip (Rescue 79 mm from Spyderco on left) and the deep-carry one (ZT 0707 from Zero Tolerance Knives on right) when attached on the pocket. Tammy Cobb photo.

for defense might dictate a more concealable option compared to a knife that’s going to be used all day long for various chores. Above all, though, it should be comfortable. A carry system that’s awkward or uncomfortable will just end up being left at home, meaning you won’t have the knife with you when you need it.



Carrying a knife on a lanyard around your neck will keep it within easy reach, but be wary of choke hazards. Shown is a Companion by Morakniv. Tammy Cobb photo.

LANYARDS

When you get right down to it, there are two types of lanyards: those that are functional and those that are strictly decorative. The latter might feature beads, some of which can be truly beautiful and intricately designed, or other adornments.

A functional lanyard is typically a loop that is large enough to fit around the hand. It is used to increase retention of the knife, preventing it from falling if your grip loosens, that sort of thing. However, I’ll share a word of caution with you, something I learned from a retired British Intelligence officer years ago. If you’re using a knife for defense, don’t loop the lanyard around your wrist. What can happen is that if you’re able to cut or stab your attacker, they will naturally turn away from the knife. If the blade is caught by their body or clothing, the lanyard around your wrist will pull you along with them.

The other type of functional lanyard is a woven strand, rather than a loop. These are sometimes used on smaller knives to give you a little extra purchase for your grip when you hold the knife. This style of lanyard is also occasionally used to assist in removing a knife from your pocket, though this is far more often for a folding knife than a fixed blade. **KIBG**

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CONSIDER A CUSTOM

WHETHER YOU WANT TO USE THEM,
DISPLAY THEM, OR INVEST IN THEM,
FOLLOW THESE KEY TIPS

STORY BY JASON FRY

I'M NOT SURE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ONE DAY I WOKE UP AND EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE IN THE WORLD WERE HONEST, STRAIGHTFORWARD, AND ACCURATELY REPRESENTED. I'd think I had been abducted by aliens or something, because the world I'm familiar with is often deceptive, or at least has yucky consequences for my bad choices.

When it comes to buying and selling collectible and custom knives, I'd love to say, "It's all good, just go buy one. Maybe buy a dozen, because it always works out great!" But we instinctively know from observing the world around us that it's not "all good" all the time.

There are two main areas that are important to knife collecting satisfaction: accurately judging the quality of a knife, and accurately managing the economics of collecting.

FIT AND FINISH

Let's dive first into the category of knife quality often described as "fit and finish," the degree to which the elements of a knife are clean and tight. Fit and finish often vary with price. You may expect a few errors on a \$100 knife that would be unacceptable on a \$300 knife. Once you get to the mid-level, around \$500 to \$1,500, the knives had better be darn good, and any errors had better be small or well hidden. At the high end, there is an expectation that there will be very few points of error, or none altogether.

There are many elements of a knife that must fit together tightly. A quality knife should not have any gaps on the handle between the scales and tang. There should not be any gaps or lines between the handle material and bolsters or guard. There should be no gap between the tang of a knife and pinned bolsters, and there should be a tight fit between the guard slot and ricasso of a stick tang knife. Black glue can hide some minor gaps on dark material, whereas wide gaps are a major error even when filled with glue.





Collecting custom knives can be fun and worthwhile, but it pays to do your homework. Shown is a Travis Fry dagger and sheath that features CPM154CM and Lapis Lazuli Truestone. Caleb Royer photo.

“...TWO MAIN AREAS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO KNIFE COLLECTING SATISFACTION: ACCURATELY JUDGING THE QUALITY OF A KNIFE, AND ACCURATELY MANAGING THE ECONOMICS...”

As a knife's complexity increases, so does the opportunity for fit error. A full-tang knife may have as few as two joints, those between each handle side and the tang. On the other hand, a frame handled Bowie or fine folding knife may have a dozen or more points that must be fit up tightly without gaps. Folding knives have a few other areas of fit that are critical. The blade should be centered evenly between the liners. The various elements along the back of the knife (liners, spring, back spacer, etc.) should be flush and uniformly fit.

Next for consideration is the quality of the knife's finish. There are several key points. One, the finish of the blade, handle, and fittings needs to be uniform. Whether the knife is "forge finished" or mirror polished, and whether the handle is Micarta or ivory, the finish of each element needs to be consistent, with no underlying scratches.

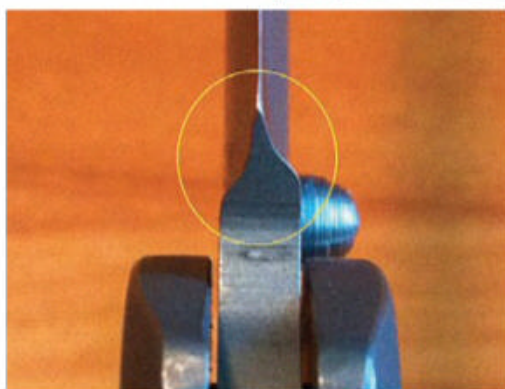
The pattern on the blade should be clean and uniform. In my opinion, a knife blade can be called "finished" at a minimum of 400 grit, but I know others who would disagree in both the coarser and finer directions. Only the maker and buyer can decide if the finish is acceptable, but regardless of the final grit, there should be no unintentional marks.

I mentioned the finish of the handle material. Some materials, such as stag, are best left with their natural texture, with just a few parts ground away and finished cleanly. Other materials, such as canvas Micarta or horse mat are good at "hiding" underlying scratches, and you can get away with a uniform 220- or even 120-grit finish on occasion.

Ivory and bone are some of the hardest to finish, as any underlying scratch is going to stand out very badly. Areas to look for underlying handle scratches are inside any low spots like palm swells or finger grooves, and on the sides right at the butt between the back pin, and the back edge of the handle.



Above: In this picture, notice the gaps between the bolster and the blade. Other errors include asymmetrical shaping, pins of a different material than the bolster, and an edge that is too thick prior to sharpening. Maker's mark is digitally obscured. Texas Knifemakers' Guild photo.



Above: On this unidentified production knife, the plunge is grossly uneven, beyond what's acceptable even on a low-end production knife. Texas Knifemakers' Guild photo.



Top, Right: In this picture, the primary visible error is the small glue-filled gap on the top side scale. Bolster fit is acceptable and even. This represents high quality mid-level fit and finish. The plunge is not visible at the correct angle to judge symmetry in this picture. Texas Knifemakers' Guild photo.

Center, Right: In this picture, Karl Andersen demonstrates a clean plunge and uniform finish. Although this knife is pictured at only 180 grit, a clean underlying finish like this is one of the key steps to a clean final finish. Andersen recommends a final finish of at least 600 grit. Karl Andersen photo.



These knives by the author, Jason Fry, illustrate quality mid-level fit and finish. Any gaps are small or invisible, and the handles are symmetrical with no visible scratches. Author photo.



Common places to inspect for underlying scratches on the blade include the spine (particularly in the top middle of the knife), the low points of any finger grooves, and the blade finish right up against the plunge cuts. These are among the hardest areas to finish cleanly.

EVEN STEVEN

Symmetry also falls under the label of fit and finish. The shape of the finished knife should be symmetrical, particularly side to side. Handle shaping should result in a uniform oval or upside down egg shaped profile at the butt, with no variation in shape or thickness in one side or another.

Any guard or bolsters should be evenly fit and symmetrically shaped. If it's different but not obviously intentional, it's not right. Sometimes even if it's intentional, it's still not right, but design and proportion are discussions for another day.

The plunges of a knife are an area where symmetry is critical. Whether the plunge cuts are square, rounded, or even slowly swooped isn't relevant here, so long as the edge is centered and the plunges are the same on both sides. When a discerning customer picks up a knife off my table and immediately checks the plunges, I know they're the real deal.

The plunges should also terminate at the same height and angle at the top of the blade. This is an area that takes skill and effort to get right. This is also an area where the range of what's acceptable varies a little bit with price, but if the price is high, the plunges better be "dead nuts" correct.

THE DAILY GRIND

The main bevel grind also merits further discussion. Any dips, bobbles, or bumpy areas in the grind are errors, even if they're polished out to a uniform finish. A flat grind should be flat. A hollow grind should be evenly ground across the length of the blade. One common place to find grind errors is 2 inches in front of the plunge. Sometimes the maker concentrates so much on getting the plunges right that the other edge of the grinding belt digs in a little. This 2-inch divot can appear on both flat and hollow ground knives.

Another factor of the blade grind is the edge geometry. The final edge geometry should be suited to the intended use of the knife. A thick convex grind may be perfect for an axe or even machete. A nearly invisible secondary bevel and a super-thin edge is desirable on a kitchen knife. Hunting knives should be somewhere in between the two extremes.

One way to visibly check the edge thickness is to look at how wide the sharpening bevel is. If the bevel is wide, the grind may be too thick. If the bevel is very narrow, the edge is thin, and the knife may fail if the heat treat isn't just right.

"DEMAND WILL BE LOWER FOR LAST YEAR'S HOT THING, AND SO WILL THE RESALE PRICE."

Above: One of the most sought-after knives of the season is the Boker "Dessert Warrior," a pink donut with sprinkles version of their Kalashnikov series Desert Warrior. They're insanely popular, and props to Boker for the clever design, but it's hard to see a knife like this remaining popular forever. Boker photo.

Top, Left: Karl Andersen ably demonstrates how to grind symmetrical plunges on this San Mai Bowie. In fact, taking the shot at exactly the right angle to accurately show the plunge is very difficult. This is an area where it pays to examine the knife in person. Karl Andersen photo.

Folding knives have another critical point to examine, the "action." Whether slip-joint or locking blade, the knife should open and close smoothly, with no gritty feeling or sticky spots. A slip-joint should "walk and talk," that is open and close smoothly with a discernible snap at opening and closing positions and half stop. On a liner-lock knife, the detent should be clean feeling, and the lock should not stick. The "right" action for a folding knife can be a very personal preference.

SHARP KNIVES MATTER

I am of the strong opinion that a custom knife should come at least sharp enough to shave hair along the entire edge. While there are sharpness tests more discerning than arm hair, cutting hair is a good place to start. Occasionally a maker may miss this detail, but remember

that we're talking about knives here. A dull knife isn't much of a knife at all.

At the same time, a factory knife that comes duller than you want it should be considered an annoyance. Get out your sharpening system, not your phone to call and complain, unless the maker touts their sharpness or the knife is expensive.

When it comes to fit and finish, there are many different points of error possible on a knife, both custom and factory. The discerning collector should strive to spot as many errors as possible and realize that no knife is 100% error free. Only the maker can decide when a knife is "done" to the point where the mistakes are within the margin of error for the intended function and price point. And only the buyer can decide if those errors are "too much to live with" for the price they are going to pay. The important thing is to "inspect what you expect" and make a solid informed buying decision.

KNIFE ECONOMICS

If you agree to pay an asking price, and the maker delivers the product when you pay, then that's a "good" deal. An old dickering buddy of mine used to say that a good deal is one where both parties feel like they "took" the other guy just a little bit. Your goal is to pay as little as possible, and their goal is for you to pay as much as possible, but if you agree on the price, a deal's a good deal.

Here are four things to consider about the economic factors that can potentially bring joy or pain to the knife collecting process. You'll have to do some homework if you want to get "good deals."

Lesson 1: Don't Buy the Hype

Some people want the latest and greatest thing and get great enjoyment out of buying what is the ultimate "grail" knife of a given season. For these buyers the thrill is in the hunt, and in the showing of the trophy. Just like a hunting



Top, Left: This forged hunter by Jason Fry shows a clean plunge, an even finish, and a tight guard fit with no gaps. Author photo.

Bottom, Left: Tyler Turner demonstrates top shelf fit and finish on this slip-joint knife. There are four joints hidden seamlessly along the backspring, but Tyler makes it all look like one piece. Tyler Turner photo.

Top, Right: On the spine of this slip-joint, notice small gaps between the liners and spring. This is mid-level fit and finish for a slip joint. Author photo.

Bottom, Right: This fine Johnny Stout folder with Joe Mason engraving is a great example of top-end fit and finish. Look carefully and see if you can spot any errors, but I'd be surprised if you find one. SharpByCoop photo.



Mastersmith Kyle Royer demonstrates a complex series of techniques on this Bowie including bluing, gold inlay, and exceptional mosaic Damascus steel. Notice the straight lines with no wiggles, bobbles, or errors. Truly world-class! SharpByCoop photo.



Tony Baker demonstrates excellent fit on curved blue coral inlays on this inter-frame folder. Tony learned to execute these techniques at a high level from his good friends Joe Kious and Warren Osborne. SharpByCoop photo.

trophy, the story of the pursuit and the reminders of the hunt become a prized possession. If you want to be that kind of buyer, buy what you want and enjoy the heck out of it!

Demand will be lower for last year's hot thing, and so will the resale price. I won't go so far as to say don't buy the hot knife. Many of us spend money on experiences (what do you gain long term from a concert or a trip to the movies?) or on depreciating possessions like cars or boats. In some ways if you enjoy it, it doesn't matter if you lose some money on a knife or it's not a good "investment."

Many of us "regular" folks have to be a little more careful with our funds. If you chase what's hot, you'll end up buying at times of peak demand, which means you'll pay a higher price. By the time you get tired of that knife or want to sell, everyone else just might be tired of it as well, as the knife world will have moved on to the next hot thing. If you're one of the folks for whom a sour ending ruins the whole experience, don't buy hot. If you have an eye toward appreciation of values and want to "make money" on your knife collecting hobby, don't buy hot.

For some people, the thrill is in finding the next hot one, before it gets hot. Wouldn't we all have loved to have purchased a bunch of Microsoft stock in 1993? If we were better at predicting the future, we'd make better knife picks for our collection, just like we'd make better choices in our stock portfolio. Still, if you "hit" one once in a while, buy the maker's work right before he hits the big time and make lots of money, it can be quite a thrill and keep you buying knives on a regular basis.

Another point of caution when it comes to hype has to do with the "flash in the pan" types who grow smoking hot quickly, beyond their market position or ability to produce. It has happened in the knife world and will happen again that someone may be better at



marketing than knifemaking, or better at Instagram videos than filling knife orders. If the hype of a particular maker turns you off or looks suspicious, trust your gut and hold off on purchasing. Sometimes makers flame out as spectacularly as they rose to fame.

Lesson 2: Don't Overspend at the Beginning

"Walk before you run" is typically decent advice. Knife collecting is about finding joy in knives, and at the beginning, small mistakes hurt less. If you start with \$500 dollars to spend and buy five quality production knives at \$100 each, you may enjoy them a long time. If you start with the same \$500 and buy a custom at a show from an overhyped maker who quickly fades away, you may sour to collecting altogether.

When you gamble more, the losses cost more. The opposite is somewhat true as well, however. If you spend your \$500 on fifty \$10

gas station knives, you'll have a great big pile of crappy, worthless knives when you're done. The trick is finding a good balance between price and quality, and finding that balance takes time to learn.

As you learn more about the market segment you're interested in, don't be afraid to invest more as you grow. You may reach a point where you don't want the Chinese ones, but rather the American ones. Or maybe you don't want production, you want midtech. Or maybe you won't want the midtech one with the maker's name on it, you may want the custom one made by the maker himself. Hopefully your budget will grow to accommodate your growing expertise and preferences.

Lesson 3: Buy the Person, Not Just the Knife

When you invest in Amazon stock, you are just working toward making a rich man richer. You're buying a piece of paper or an electronic

Above: Italian Salvatore Puddu is a master of multi-piece inlay. This world-class multi-blade folder features tiny pieces of tortoise shell carefully inlaid with no gaps to be seen. This level of fit and finish is nearly impossible to execute and commands a high price. SharpByCoop photo.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Top, Right: Princeton Wong won "best new maker" at the 2021 Blade Show. Here he is with the customer who bought the very first knife he ever sold. I suspect the value of this collector's collection has grown along with Princeton's industry accolades. Princeton Wong photo.

Bottom, Left: These three folders by Brian Nadeau feature machine-perfect textures on anodized titanium handles. Even when machinery is involved, this level of finish takes extreme skill. Well-done, Brian! SharpByCoop photo.

data point that says you "own" a tiny piece of the company and you expect a mathematically increasing return for your investment.

I believe buying a custom knife isn't much like buying a blue-chip stock. When you buy a knife, pretty good odds your money won't go to that knifemaker's yacht payment or summer home fund. When you buy a knife from an individual knifemaker, you're more likely sending his kids to daycare or piano lessons, paying for his electricity, and buying his wife new shoes. If you buy at a knife show, you probably literally bought the maker's dinner. When you invest in a knife, you support a specific person, not "the man behind the curtain."

Even if you find joy by investing in a person by buying their product, you still owe it to yourself to invest wisely. Of course, you should buy a knife you like, that you find useful, or that may make you a decent return on your money. At the same time,

**“WHEN IT COMES TO
KNIFE COLLECTING,
ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE
WHAT KNIVES YOU
LIKE, WHAT KNIVES
ARE ‘WORTH IT’ TO
YOU TO PURSUE AND
PURCHASE...”**



you should be looking for people to help, individual makers whose lives you will improve by your relationship and the purchases you make over time. You may be making friends, not just money, which can add another degree of magnitude to your enjoyment of knife collecting.

Lesson 4: Buy What You Know

The more you know, the fewer expensive mistakes you're likely to make and the more good deals you're likely to find. The less you know, the more likely it is that you'll get a bad deal, purchase a knife you'll be dissatisfied with, or a knife you later regret. The more you know, the better. This seems to be a universal principle of life and economics, and it applies to knives as well.

First off, buy knives from brands or people you know have a good market position. Many times, a well-known brand is successful for good reasons. A classic brand, such as Case or Spyderco, may be a great place to start, or a well-known Knifemakers' Guild member or somebody from the "Slip-joint Cartel." When you have the chance to know the maker or seller personally, that knowledge makes your purchases more likely to bring you joy or a good return on your investment.

Second, buy knives from reputable dealers or purveyors. While you may get a great deal from a pawn shop or somebody's cousin who is a knife collector, there is some

measure of protection in buying from well-known retailers such as Blade HQ, AG Russell, or Arizona Custom Knives. Until you become familiar enough with the market to know exactly what you're looking at, it's wise to stick with the major dealers.

As another example, consider buying from the folks who advertise in the knife magazines. If their business is legitimate enough to afford the expense of advertising in print, they're more likely to be honest and stick around.

Third, buy the knives you're familiar with. You may get joy out of buying a knife the first time you've ever seen or heard of it. On the other hand, in my opinion you're even more likely to enjoy a knife that you know in your heart is a great one, because you've studied it, chased it, pursued it, and finally purchased after careful consideration.

Sometimes the journey is as fun as the destination, and the pursuit of the grail is worth as much as the grail itself. You may get in a rut and feel like you're buying the same knife over and over. That's no good either. Balance your knowledge with both width and depth. You may dive deep into one model, one maker, one brand, or you may spread your collection broadly by buying one knife from as many different people and places as possible. Either way, you'll get familiar with the knives that you like, and you'll end up going as deep or as broad in your collection as you like.

Let's wrap this up with two stories. In one story, Bob buys a knife, then another, then another. He wanders aimlessly through the knife world throwing money everywhere. One day he wakes up and finds himself surrounded by knives that he doesn't like, knives of poor quality, knives he can't sell for a profit, knives that don't even cut. After his untimely death, his wife sells the whole collection for pennies on the dollar at a garage sale. Was Bob a good knife collector? He may have found some joy in knives, and that's good. Other than that, he seems to have done poorly.

Larry on the other hand started as a hunter and purchased a custom knife to go with his hunting rifle. He then did some reading on custom knives and found a few makers whose styles he preferred. He began to buy knives for his sons and business partners, and then started buying knives for his own collection. Eventually he found so much joy and knowledge in the knife world that he began to purchase knives that he knew were underpriced for their value.

He kept good records of what he bought and from whom, and his spreadsheet included price paid and retail value. After his retirement, he gave the best of his collection to his boys and sold the rest at a handsome profit. Was Larry a good knife collector? He seems to have been knowledgeable and wise, and found both joy and profit in his collection. He died with zero knives to his name. Other than that, he seems to have done very well.

When it comes to knife collecting, only you can decide what knives you like, what knives are "worth it" to you to pursue and purchase, and whether knife collecting adds to your overall joy in life. By carefully considering who and where you purchase from, by doing your own due diligence regarding quality and price, and by continual learning, you can have a wonderful knife collecting experience. **KIBG**

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Look closely at the machine finish on these blades by Andy Roy of Fiddleback Forge. All the scratches are uniform in direction and size, and there are no errant marks on the handle material either. Dirk Loots photo.

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MI23311	Orange	3/16"	\$5.99
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CZ0820	1/8" x 2"	18"	\$12.95
CZ1015	5/32" x 1 1/2"	18"	\$12.15
CZ1020	5/32" x 2"	18"	\$16.25
CZ1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	18"	\$14.65
CZ1220	3/16" x 2"	18"	\$19.50
CZ1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	18"	\$19.25
CZ1620	1/4" x 2"	18"	\$25.65
CV0615	3/32" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$15.40
CV0620	3/32" x 2"	36"	\$20.50
CV0815	1/8" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$16.85
CV0820	1/8" x 2"	36"	\$22.45
CV1015	5/32" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$20.95
CV1020	5/32" x 2"	36"	\$27.95
CV1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$25.25
CV1220	3/16" x 2"	36"	\$33.65
CV1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$32.95
CV1620	1/4" x 2"	36"	\$43.95

15N20

With a 2% high nickel content, 15N20 is the layer of steel that produces the bright contrast for making Damascus. **Typical chemistry: C .75, Mn .40, Si .30, Ni 2.00, P max .020, S max .010**

CAT#	SIZE	LENGTH	PRICE
XN152	.049" x 1 1/2"	12"	\$4.50
XN252	.049" x 2"	12"	\$5.50
XN198	.095" x 1 1/2"	18"	\$12.95
XN298	.095" x 2"	18"	\$14.95
XN118	.120" x 1 1/2"	18"	\$14.95
XN218	.120" x 2"	18"	\$17.95
XN196	.090" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$26.95
XN296	.090" x 2"	36"	\$31.95
XN116	.120" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$33.95
XN216	.120" x 2"	36"	\$37.95

1084 HIGH CARBON STEEL

1084 Forging Steel is an excellent steel for beginning knife makers and professionals alike. An ideal choice for forging and for layering with 15N20 for Damascus. Hot rolled and annealed.

Chemistry: C .80/.93, Mn .60/.90

CAT#	SIZE	LENGTH	PRICE
XW1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	18"	\$13.23
XW1220	3/16" x 2"	18"	\$19.26
XW1240	3/16" x 4"	18"	\$33.75
XW1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	18"	\$19.26
XW1620	1/4" x 2"	18"	\$22.89
XW1640	1/4" x 4"	18"	\$48.24
XV1215	3/16" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$24.09
XV1220	3/16" x 2"	36"	\$33.75
XV1240	3/16" x 4"	36"	\$63.94
XV1615	1/4" x 1 1/2"	36"	\$33.75
XV1620	1/4" x 2"	36"	\$48.24
XV1640	1/4" x 4"	36"	\$90.51

QUENCHING OILS



CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
BS201	CITGO Oil 1 gal.	\$51.95
BS205	CITGO Oil 5 gal.	\$169.95
BS301	PARK'S 50 Oil 1 gal.	\$56.95
BS305	PARK'S 50 Oil 5 gal.	\$212.95
BS401	PARK'S AAA Oil 1 gal.	\$44.95
BS405	PARK'S AAA Oil 5 gal.	\$159.95

METAL POWDERS

325 mesh metal powders - perfect for creating your own mokume, adding inlays, or cold casting parts for your next project. Metal powders of 1084, 1095 or 1080 with a 2% pure nickel or 4% pure nickel mix for making canister damascus.



CAT#	METAL	SIZE	PRICE
PSBR2	Brass	2 lb	\$33.95
PSCU2	Copper	2 lb	\$39.95
PSBZ2	Bronze	2 lb	\$39.95
PSNS2	Nickel Silver	2 lb	\$68.95
PSBR5	Brass	5 lb	\$73.95
PSCU5	Copper	5 lb	\$97.95
PSBZ5	Bronze	5 lb	\$84.95
PSNS5	Nickel Silver	5 lb	\$143.95
PSNI1	Pure Nickel	1 lb	\$45.95
PS845	1084	5 lbs	\$28.95
PS955	1095	5 lbs	\$29.95
PS802	1080 w/2% Ni	5 lbs	\$29.95
PS804	1080 w/4% Ni	5 lbs	\$31.95
PS841	1084	25 lbs	\$142.95
PS951	1095	25 lbs	\$142.95

KNIFEMAKERS CENTER SCRIBE

*Shown
marking
center in steel*



Scribe the center lines as a guide for grinding knife blades. Can be adjusted from 0-1/2" with 1/32" per revolution using the fine adjustment screw. Uses a Carbide tip.

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
JS305	Center Scribe	\$39.95
JS307	Replace Carbide Tip	\$9.95

HARDENED FILE GUIDE



Precision machined from A-2 tool steel and hardened to 62RHC. Overall 3.250", maximum blade width 2", each jaw is 3/8" x 3/4". Made in USA.

CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
FG101	File Guide	\$49.95

JANTZ PATTERN BLADES

Custom quality 100% made in USA from the best USA made steels & cryogenically heat treated. Will not find a better product or value.



PATTERN #31 BLADE

Overall 7 5/8", 3" Blade, 1 1/8" Width, 5/32" Thick. Hole sizes: Bolster 1/8", Handle 1/4", Lanyard 1/4".

CAT.#	STEEL	FINISH	PRICE
J3196	1095	Stonewash	\$27.45



PATTERN #38 BLADE

Overall 7", 2 1/2" Blade, 1" Width, 5/32" Thick. Hole sizes: Bolster 1/8", Handle 1/8", Lanyard 1/4".

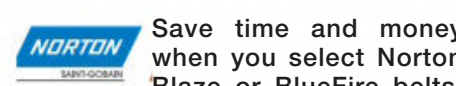
CAT.#	STEEL	FINISH	PRICE
J3828	D2	Satin	\$38.45
J3838	CPM® S30V®	Satin	\$49.45



PATTERN #21 BLADE

Overall 7 3/4", 3" Blade, 1 1/8" Width, 5/32" Thick. Hole sizes: Bolster 1/8", Handle 1/4", Lanyard 1/4".

CAT.#	STEEL	FINISH	PRICE
J2108	440C	Satin	\$37.35
J2128	D2	Satin	\$37.35



Save time and money when you select Norton Blaze or BlueFire belts, which last 50 to 200 percent longer than comparable belts. Blaze belts are also offered in 1" x 30", 1" x 42" and 2" x 48".



CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
NA72036	2" x 72" -36 grit	\$12.95
NA72050	2" x 72" -50 grit	\$12.95
NA72060	2" x 72" -60 grit	\$10.45
NA72080	2" x 72" -80 grit	\$10.45
NA72120	2" x 72" -120 grit	\$9.95



CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
NA8036	2" x 72" -36 grit	\$9.95
NA8050	2" x 72" -50 grit	\$8.50
NA8060	2" x 72" -60 grit	\$7.95
NA8080	2" x 72" -80 grit	\$7.50
NA8120	2" x 72" -120 grit	\$6.50

3/16" x 12" MOSAIC PINS



CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
MP300	Morning Star	\$23.95
MP310	Lucky Clover	\$23.95
MP320	Speeding Bullet	\$30.95
MP330	Sunrise Glory	\$30.95



Heavy Duty Red Canvas Handle with Lucky Clover Mosaic Pin

1/4" x 12" MOSAIC PINS



CAT.#	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
MP440	Silver Star	\$45.95
MP405	Circle Of Light	\$45.95
MP400	Pandora's Box	\$45.95
MP430	Full House	\$45.95

EDC

THE RELIABLE TOOL YOU CARRY AND USE EVERY DAY

PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

YOU CARRY ONE ALWAYS AND WONDER HOW ANYONE CAN GET THROUGH A DAY WITHOUT ONE. Often, an everyday carry knife is a tool so versatile that it could be made to serve well in most any of the roles listed in this issue. From tactical to hunting and fishing to survival to food prep, these knives are called on to do it all because they're the ones close at hand all the time. Open a package, clip a coupon, cut a rope, fend off an attacker, free someone trapped in a vehicle, or slice some meat and cheese for your lunch. Whether you choose one that's long and sleek, wide and robust, or small enough to slip in a vest pocket, these are the knives that provide the most value because you use them so often.





**“...A TOOL SO VERSATILE
THAT IT COULD BE MADE
TO SERVE WELL IN MOST
ANY OF THE ROLES LISTED
IN THIS ISSUE.”**

RAPID REVIEW

NEWEST BUGOUT SURE TO BECOME A FAVORITE

SOMETIMES ONE IS ENOUGH. Lately, I've been carrying a Benchmade Bugout, the company's latest, the 535BK-4 model. To make sure I was giving it a thorough test, this slim folder was the only knife I carried over a period of several weeks.

What I found with this Bugout is that it ably handled every job I called on it to do. Not once did I wish I had more knife or a different knife. Benchmade has produced the Bugout in several iterations since 2017, offering it with different blade steels and handle composition. If you really want it your way, now you can order a customized version by choosing the features you want on the Benchmade website.

This particular model is pretty much how I want any EDC knife. I don't think I'd change a thing. It has a well-configured 3.24-inch drop-point blade with a **swedge on the spine** that gives it a good pointy **tip**. **The edge on this model is plain, not serrated.** Significant to this model is that the blade **is made of the highly regarded M390 steel with a matte black coating.** My knife arrived **extremely sharp.**

The handle is a **gunmetal gray aluminum with a nicely textured sunburst pattern engraved in it.** There is a rounded **triangular lanyard hole** that's actually large **enough to be useful too.** The blade opens **smoothly, and dual thumb studs help you to do it with either hand.** The handle is an open **design that won't trap debris.** A nice touch is **that the spacers and thumb studs are an attractive red color,** offsetting the gray handle and black blade and hardware in an **attractive way.**

The Bugout carries **as well as it cuts.** It's a very slim knife and **it weighs a scant 2.5 ounces.** There's a **Mini Bugout** too if you want to go **even smaller.** I'll stick with this one **that offers a great balance of carry convenience with a blade big enough to be highly capable.**

SPECIFICATIONS

BENCHMADE BUGOUT (535BK-4)

Overall Length: 7.46 inches

Closed Length: 4.22 inches

Blade Length: 3.24 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.09 inch

Blade Material: M390

Handle Material: 6061-T6 Aluminum

Locking Mechanism: Axis lock

Weight: 2.5 ounces

Origin: USA

Other: Pocket clip, reversible, tip-up carry

MSRP: \$275

Benchmade.com



BUYER'S GUIDE

01 KNIVES OF ALASKA

KNIVES OF ALASKA ONYX

Overall Length: 6.75 inches

Closed Length: 3.9 inches

Blade Length: 2.6 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.095 inch

Blade Material: S30V

Handle Material: Olive drab/black G10

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock

Weight: 2.2 ounces

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$109.99

KnivesOfAlaska.com

02 WOOX

WOOX LEGGENDA

Overall Length: 8.25 inches

Closed Length: 4.75 inches

Blade Length: 3.5 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.17 inch

Blade Material: D2

Handle Material: Walnut with
carbon fiber liners

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock

Sheath: Leather, sold separately

Weight: 6.14 ounces

Origin: Italy and USA

MSRP: \$249

WooxStore.com

03 BUCK KNIVES

BUCK 112 RANGER 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Overall Length: 7.25 inches

Closed Length: 4.25 inches

Blade Length: 3 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.12 inch

Blade Material: 420HC

Handle Material: Ebony wood
with brass bolsters

Locking Mechanism: Back lock

Sheath Material: Leather

Weight: 5.6 ounces

Origin: USA

Other: With finger grooves or not;
50th Anniversary Edition handle medallion

MSRP: \$59.99

BuckKnives.com

04 BLUE RIDGE KNIVES
DEEJO KUPPER
NAKED

Overall Length: 6.69 inches
Closed Length: 3.54 inches
Blade Length: 3.15 inches
Blade Material: Z40C13
Handle Material: Stainless steel
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 0.95 ounce
Origin: Asia and France
MSRP: \$74.90
BlueRidgeKnives.com

05 CASE KNIVES
CASE MARILLA

Overall Length: 8.15 inches
Closed Length: 4.75 inches
Blade Length: 3.4 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.149 inch
Blade Material: S35VN
Handle Material: Aluminum with G10 insert
Locking Mechanism: Frame lock
Weight: 3.6 ounces
Origin: USA
Other: Flipper opening
MSRP: \$179.99
CaseKnives.com

06 BRADFORD KNIVES
BRADFORD
GUARDIAN 3.5
SHEEPSFOOT

Overall Length: 7.25 inches
Blade Length: 3.5 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.15 inch
Blade Material: Bohler M390
Handle Material: Micarta
Sheath Material: Leather, horizontal carry
Weight: 6.3 ounces
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$189
BradfordKnives.com

9"

8"

7"

6"

5"

4"

3"

2"

1"

0"



**07** KERSHAW KNIVES**KERSHAW
HIGHBALL XL****Overall Length:** 7.5 inches**Closed Length:** 4.3 inches**Blade Length:** 3.3 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.118 inch**Blade Material:** D2**Handle Material:** Stainless steel**Locking Mechanism:** Frame lock**Weight:** 3.8 ounces**Origin:** China**Other:** Nail nick opening**MSRP:** \$91.99**Kershaw.KAIUSA.com****08** BOKER USA**BOKER PLUS
KWAIKEN AIR
COCOBOLO****Overall Length:** 8.39 inches**Closed Length:** 4.85 inches**Blade Length:** 3.54 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.09 inch**Blade Material:** VG-10**Handle Material:** Cocobolo wood**Locking Mechanism:** Liner lock**Weight:** 2.15 ounces**Origin:** Asia**Other:** Flipper opening**MSRP:** \$99.95**BokerUSA.com****09** SPYDERCO**SPYDERCO DELICA 4
THIN BLUE LINE****Overall Length:** 7.15 inches**Closed Length:** 4.25 inches**Blade Length:** 2.90 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.098 inch**Blade Material:** VG-10,
partially serrated**Handle Material:** FRN (fiber-
glass-reinforced nylon)**Locking Mechanism:** Back lock**Weight:** 2.3 ounces**Origin:** Japan**Other:** Benefits Tunnels
to Towers Foundation**MSRP:** \$130**Spyderco.com**

10 A.G. RUSSELL KNIVES**AG RUSSELL MOSQUITO HAWK****Overall Length:** 6.37 inches**Closed Length:** 3.62 inches**Blade Length:** 2.75 inches**Blade Material:** 8Cr13MoV**Handle Material:** Carbon fiber**Locking Mechanism:** Liner lock**Weight:** 1.2 ounces**Origin:** China**MSRP:** \$85**AGRussell.com****11 HAVALON KNIVES****HAVALON REDI****Overall Length:** 7.25 inches**Closed Length:** 4.25 inches**Blade Length:** 3 inches**Blade Material:** AUS-8 stainless steel**Blade Thickness:** 0.031 inch**Weight:** 2.0 ounces**Handle Material:**

Military grade polymer

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock**Other:** Comes with 2 replaceable blades; assisted opener**Origin:** Taiwan**MSRP:** \$49.99**Havalon.com****12 FALLKNIVEN SWEDEN****FALLKNIVEN RLD1****Overall Length:** 6.5 inches**Closed Length:** 3.7 inches**Blade Length:** 2.7 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.118 inch**Blade Material:** Elmax**Handle Material:** Desert ironwood**Locking Mechanism:** Liner lock**Weight:** 2.57 ounces**Origin:** Sweden**MSRP:** \$273.32**Fallkniven.se/en**

9"

8"

7"

6"

5"

4"

3"

2"

1"

0"





13 COLUMBIA RIVER KNIFE & TOOL **CRKT STYLUS**

Overall Length: 7.38 inches
Closed Length: 4.15 inches
Blade Length: 3.18 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.13 inch
Blade Material: 12V27 Sandvik
Handle Material: Aluminum
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 2.1 ounces
Other: Flipper opening
Origin: China
MSRP: \$69.99
CRKT.com

14 TOPS KNIVES **TOPS HORNERO**

Overall Length: 7.13 inches
Blade Length: 3.0 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.19 inch
Blade Material: 1095
Handle Material: Micarta
Sheath Material: Kydex
Weight: 6.8 ounces with sheath
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$150
TOPSKnives.com

15 SPARTAN BLADES **SPARTAN ASTOR**

Overall Length: 8.25 inches
Closed Length: 4.625 inches
Blade Length: 3.5 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.12 inch
Blade Material: CTS-XHP
Handle Material: Carbon fiber/
 G10 composite
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 5.12 ounces
Origin: Imported
Other: Oil-infused bronze bushing
MSRP: \$145
SpartanBladesUSA.com

16 SPARTAN BLADES**SPARTAN TALOS****Overall Length:** 7 inches**Closed Length:** 4 inches**Blade Length:** 3.12 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.12 inch**Blade Material:** CTS-XHP**Handle Material:** G10**Locking Mechanism:** Liner lock**Weight:** 2.34 ounces**Origin:** Taiwan**Other:** Oil-infused bronze bushing**MSRP:** \$115**SpartanBladesUSA.com****17 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS GROUP) KNIVES****SOG AEGIS AT****Overall Length:** 8.14 inches**Closed Length:** 5.01 inches**Blade Length:** 3.13 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.12 inch**Blade Material:** Cryo D2**Handle Material:** GRN**Locking Mechanism:** AT-XR**Weight:** 4.4 ounces**Origin:** Taiwan**Other:** Spine-mounted safety switch**MSRP:** \$84.95**SOGKnives.com****18 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS GROUP) KNIVES****SOG ULTRA XR****Overall Length:** 6.4 inches**Closed Length:** 3.6 inches**Blade Length:** 2.8 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.08 inch**Blade Material:** S35VN**Handle Material:** Carbon fiber**Locking Mechanism:** XR**Weight:** 1.2 ounces**Origin:** China**Other:** Thumb hole opening**MSRP:** \$124.95**SOGKnives.com**

**19 SPARTAN BLADES****SPARTAN RONIN SHOTO****Overall Length:** 7.75 inches**Closed Length:** 5.25 inches**Blade Length:** 2.5 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.13 inch**Blade Material:** CTS-XHP**Handle Material:** G10**Locking Mechanism:** Liner**Weight:** 6.25 ounces**Origin:** Taiwan**Other:** Emerson Wave on spine**MSRP:** \$155**SpartanBladesUSA.com****20 BENCHMADE KNIFE COMPANY****BENCHMADE MINI OSBORNE****Overall Length:** 6.76 inches**Closed Length:** 3.84 inches**Blade Length:** 2.92 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.104 inch**Blade Material:** CPM-S30V**Handle Material:** G10**Locking Mechanism:** Axis lock**Weight:** 2.19 ounces**Origin:** USA**MSRP:** \$205**Benchmade.com****20 BENCHMADE KNIFE COMPANY****BENCHMADE MINI BUGOUT****Overall Length:** 6.49 inches**Closed Length:** 3.7 inches**Blade Length:** 2.82 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.09 inch**Blade Material:** CPM-S30V**Handle Material:** CF-Elite**Locking Mechanism:** Axis lock**Weight:** 1.5 ounces**Origin:** USA**MSRP:** \$160**Benchmade.com**

SURVIV

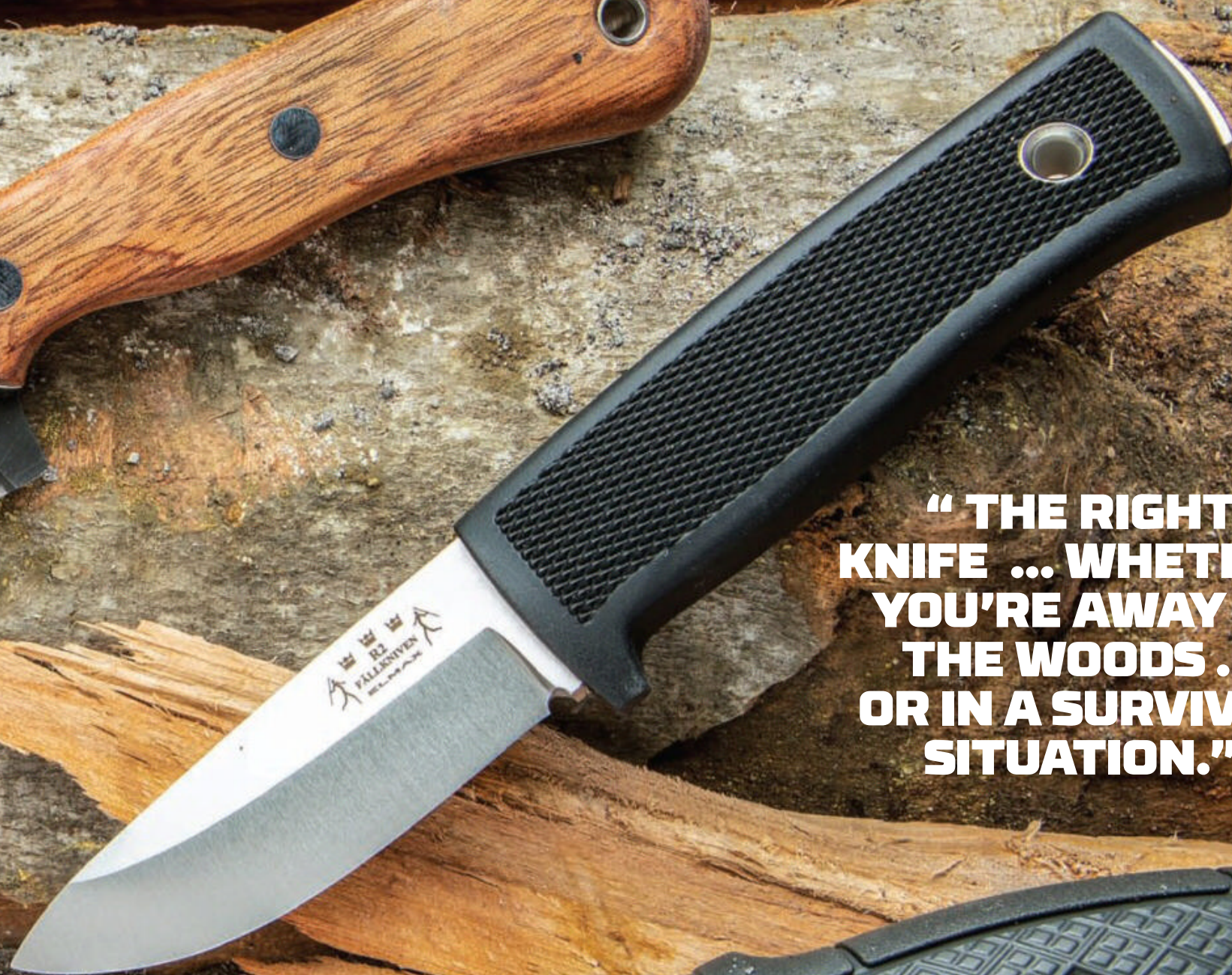
PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

HAVING THE RIGHT KNIFE CAN BE CRITICAL WHEN YOU HAVE MINIMAL GEAR AND YOU'RE USING A BLADE TO IMPROVISE THE THINGS YOU NEED, USING THE RESOURCES YOU GATHER ALONG THE WAY. That's true whether you're away in the woods for a bushcraft weekend or you're in a survival situation and your life depends on your ingenuity, your skill, and your blade. Survival and bushcraft blades can include the smallest carving knives to the largest hatchets, axes, and machetes. Here we present a cross-section of edged tools you can use when you're living lean.



BUSH

AL,



**“THE RIGHT
KNIFE ... WHETHER
YOU’RE AWAY IN
THE WOODS ...
OR IN A SURVIVAL
SITUATION.”**



CRAFT

RAPID REVIEW

ESEE-4HM: A COMFORTING PIECE OF SURVIVAL GEAR

HAVE SEVERAL ESEE FIXED-BLADE KNIVES AND I LOVE THEM ALL. The Xancudo I carry when I'm traveling light and covering miles over tough terrain. The Ashley Game Knife accompanies me on remote deer hunts. But the ESEE-4HM is probably the one I'd pick if I was in a wilderness area where there was the possibility, if lost, injured or otherwise, that I wouldn't be able to make it back home as anticipated.

ESEE knives are designed by folks associated with Randall's Adventure & Training, one of the premier survival schools both here and abroad. These guys know what it takes to live in the most remote, unforgiving places on the planet, and the knives they choose are made to perform in extreme settings.

The ESEE-4HM is the right size for most of my personal needs. It measures 8.88 inches overall, with a 4.38-inch drop-point blade of reliable 1095 carbon steel with a flat grind. Yes, there are times when I use bigger knives, hatchets, axes, and machetes. But most often I'm using those at a base camp I've established, where I'm usually either not alone or not far from help.

The ESEE-4HM is big enough to handle some heavy-duty tasks without being so big that I'm apt to leave it behind. My knife came with a leather sheath, but you can choose one of Kydex if you prefer.

The "HM" in the model stands for "handle modification." The original ESEE-4, also a very good knife, is shaped a bit differently. It has a slightly flatter handle and a finger guard with the handle scales flowing right down to the end of it. Forward of that is a large choil. The HM model doesn't have that choil or the finger guard, but the ricasso forms somewhat of a natural

guard because the handle on the HM is more narrow just behind it. The handle of the HM is more rounded and to me is more comfortable.

If I'm cold, exhausted, hungry and, yes, a bit scared, I'm more apt to get a bit sloppy with my knife-handling skills when I'm in a hurry to get a fire started or to build a shelter. In those circumstances especially, I want the knife that feels more natural in my hand so I'm not as likely to make mistakes. It comes down to personal preference. I've used both models and both are excellent. I just happen to like the HM version slightly more.

The handle scales themselves are very good. They're made of canvas Micarta and provide just the right amount of grip security without being abrasive. They're shaped to fill the hand too. This is no time to be carrying a thin-

handled knife that you selected solely on the basis of convenient carry or concealability. Whether you're living simply outdoors or struggling to stay alive, the ESEE-4HM can be a comforting piece of gear. Now excuse me while I shave up some tinder and try that darned bow-and-drill fire-starting method one more time.

SPECIFICATIONS

ESEE-4HM

Overall Length: 8.88 inches

Blade Length: 4.38 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.188 inch

Blade Material: 1095 carbon steel

Handle Material: Canvas Micarta

Sheath Material: Leather or Kydex

Weight: 7.7 ounces (knife only)

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$178.36

ESEKnives.com



BUYER'S
GUIDE

01 GERBER GEAR

GERBER
TERRACRAFT

Overall Length: 9.1 inches
Blade Length: 3.9 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.166 inch
Blade Material: S30V
Handle Material: G10
Sheath Material: Leather
Weight: 6.4 ounces
Origin: USA
Other: 90-degree spine,
hammer-ready pommel
MSRP: \$160
GerberGear.com

02 BRADFORD KNIVES

BRADFORD
GUARDIAN 4

Overall Length: 8 inches
Blade Length: 3 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.110 inch
Blade Material: D2
Handle Material: Suregrip
Sheath Material: Leather
Weight: 2.9 ounces
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$84.99
BradfordKnives.com

03 FALLKNIVEN SWEDEN

FALLKNIVEN
R2 SCOUT

Overall Length: 7.12 inches
Blade Length: 3.15 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.188 inch
Blade Material: Elmax
Handle Material: Thermorun
Sheath Material: Zytel
Weight: 4.65 ounces
Origin: Sweden
MSRP: \$273.95
Fallkniven.se/en

1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE**04 FLEXCUT TOOLS****FLEXCUT STUB
SLOYD KNIFE****Overall Length:** 7 inches**Blade Length:** 2.5 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.125 inch**Blade Material:** 1095 carbon steel**Handle Material:** Cherry hardwood**Sheath Material:** None**Weight:** 2 ounces**Origin:** USA**Other:** Carving knife**MSRP:** \$49.95**Flexcut.com****05 INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION****MORAKNIV ELDRIS
LIGHTDUTY****Overall Length:** 5.7 inches**Blade Length:** 2.3 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.80 inch**Blade Material:** Swedish stainless steel**Handle Material:** Synthetic**Sheath Material:** Polymer**Weight:** 2.77 ounces**Origin:** Sweden**MSRP:** \$24.99**IndustrialRev.com****06 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS
GROUP) KNIVES****SOG ALTAIR FX****Overall Length:** 7.6 inches**Blade Length:** 3.4 inches**Blade Material:** CPM-154**Handle Material:** Glass-reinforced
nylon (GRN)**Sheath Material:** GRN**Weight:** 2.6 ounces**Origin:** Taiwan**MAP*:** \$149.95**SOGKnives.com**

*MAP: Minimum Advertised Price





9"
8"
7"
6"
5"
4"
3"
2"
1"
0"

07 FLEXCUT TOOLS

FLEXCUT SEEKER

Overall Length: 8.5 inches

Blade Length: 4.125

Blade Thickness: 0.175 inch

Blade Material: 1095 carbon steel

Handle Material: Conditioned Sapele

Sheath Material: Leather

Weight: 6.3 ounces (8.3 with sheath)

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$149.95

Flexcut.com

08 FLEXCUT TOOLS

FLEXCUT NOMAD

Overall Length: 8.5 inches

Blade Length: 4 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.15 inch

Blade Material: 1095 carbon steel

Handle Material: Canvas Micarta with G10 liner

Sheath Material: Boltaron

Weight: 7.2 ounces (12.6 with sheath)

Origin: USA

Other: Dangler on sheath

MSRP: \$149.95

Flexcut.com

09 BLUE RIDGE KNIVES

WOOD JEWEL CARVING KNIFE

Overall Length: 9.625 inches

Blade Length: 5 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.13 inch

Blade Material: Carbon steel

Handle Material: Curly birch with reindeer horn

Sheath Material: Leather

Weight: 3.84 ounces

Origin: Finland

MSRP: \$86.95

BlueRidgeKnives.com

1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE**10** CONDOR TOOL AND KNIFE
**CONDOR BUSH
SLICER SIDEKICK**

Overall Length: 8.9 inches
Blade Length: 4.26 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.12 inch
Blade Material: 1095 high carbon steel
Handle Material: Micarta
Sheath Material: Kydex with leather belt loop
Weight: 9.17 ounces
Origin: El Salvador
MSRP: \$129.58
CondorTK.com

11 INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
**MORAKNIV KANSBOL
SURVIVAL**

Overall Length: 8.9 inches
Blade Length: 4.3 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.10 inch
Blade Material: Swedish stainless steel
Handle Material: Synthetic
Sheath Material: Polymer
Weight: 8.5 ounces
Origin: Sweden
MSRP: \$69.99
IndustrialRev.com

12 BLUE RIDGE KNIVES
**KARESUANDO
KNIVEN/GALTEN
KULTINGEN
EXCLUSIVE**

Overall Length: 7.625 inches
Blade Length: 3.25 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.122 inch
Blade Material: 5CR14MoV
Handle Material: Curly birch with glazing oil
Sheath Material: Leather
Weight: 2.88 ounces
Origin: Sweden
MSRP: \$236.95
BlueRidgeKnives.com



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PRODUCT DETAILS:	F1z
Total length (mm)	210
Blade length (mm)	97
Blade thickness (mm)	4,5
Weight (knife)	148 g
Blade profile	Convex
Steel	Lam. VG10w
Hardness (HRC)	59
Handle material	Thermorun
Sheath	Zytel

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1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE**13** ONTARIO KNIFE CO.
**ONTARIO (OKC)
ML5 BLACK BIRD**

Overall Length: 10 inches
Blade Length: 5 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.138 inch
Blade Material: 420HC
Handle Material: Micarta
Sheath Material: Leather
Weight: 16 ounces
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$174.95
OntarioKnife.com

14 TOPS KNIVES
**TOPS MINI
TANIMBOCA PUUKKO**

Overall Length: 4 inches
Blade Length: 1.63 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.09 inch
Blade Material: 1095 carbon steel
Handle Material: Canvas Micarta
Sheath Material: Leather
Weight: 1.4 ounces (26 with sheath)
Origin: USA
Other: Neck attachment, no sheath clip
MSRP: \$110
TOPSKnives.com

15 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS
GROUP) KNIVES**SOG AEGIS FX**

Overall Length: 8.8 inches
Blade Length: 3.7 inches
Blade Material: Cryo Krupp 4116
Handle Material: Glass-reinforced
 nylon (GRN) with TPU overmolding
Sheath Material: GRN
Weight: 4.7 ounces
Origin: Taiwan
Other: Various two-tone color schemes
 available
MAP*: \$89.95
SOGKnives.com
 *MAP: Minimum Advertised Price





GUARDIAN3.5 SHEEPSFOOT

Overall Length 7.25"
Horizontal Leather Sheath
M390 Stainless Steel



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MNANDI // Zulu, "Very Nice"

See the
MNANDI
at chrisreeve.com

1:2 50% of
ACTUAL SIZE**16** BLUE RIDGE KNIVES**MARBLE'S
HUNTER'S AXE****Overall Length:** 15 inches**Blade Length:** 2.875**Blade Thickness:** 0.9 inch**Blade Material:** Stainless steel**Handle Material:** Wood**Sheath Material:** Leather**Weight:** 1.26 pounds**Origin:** India**MSRP:** \$45.95**BlueRidgeKnives.com****17** TOPS KNIVES**TOPS STORM
VECTOR****Overall Length:** 18.25 inches**Blade Length:** 12.63 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.25 inch**Blade Material:** 1095 carbon steel**Handle Material:** Black canvas**Micarta with blue G10 liner****Sheath Material:** Kydex**Weight:** 24 ounces (32 with sheath)**Origin:** USA**Other:** Dangler on sheath**MSRP:** \$280**TOPSKnives.com****18** CONDOR TOOL AND KNIFE**CONDOR MOUNTAIN
PASS AXE****Overall Length:** 13.96 inches**Axe Head Dimensions:** 5.56 x 4.28 inches**Blade Material:** 1075 high carbon steel**Handle Material:** Micarta**Sheath Material:** Leather**Weight:** 29.28 ounces**Origin:** El Salvador**Other:** Designer Jason Breeden**MSRP:** \$175.98**CondorTK.com****19** CONDOR TOOL AND KNIFE**CONDOR POLAR
NORTH MACHETE****Overall Length:** 18.42 inches**Blade Length:** 11.76 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.10 inch**Blade Material:** 1075 high carbon steel**Handle Material:** Walnut**Sheath Material:** Leather**Weight:** 22.23 ounces**Origin:** El Salvador**Other:** Designer Joe Flowers**MSRP:** \$137.48**CondorTK.com**



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FOOD

**"...THERE'S
NOTHING MORE
REWARDING THAN
PREPARING A
WONDERFUL MEAL
YOURSELF..."**

SOMETHING GOOD IS COOKING

PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

WHEN IT COMES TO FEEDING THE FAMILY, THERE'S NOTHING MORE REWARDING THAN PREPARING A WONDERFUL MEAL YOURSELF, WHETHER THE INGREDIENTS COME FROM THE LOCAL MARKET, YOUR BACKYARD GARDEN, OR THE WOODS YOU'VE HUNTED. Naturally, having the sharpest, handiest blades configured for the job will make the work easier and more enjoyable. So, let's get cooking with these food prep knives.

PREP



RAPID REVIEW

INSTANT CLASSIC: TOPS DICER 8 CHEF'S KNIFE

GATHER YOUR MEAT AND VEGGIES. Slice them, chop them, dice them, and then turn your wide blade sideways and scoop them from the cutting board into the simmering pot. A good chef's knife is indispensable in the kitchen and the TOPS Dicer 8 Chef's Knife is an excellent representative of this class of blade.

This knife is part of the TOPS Dicer kitchen knife series that also includes the Dicer 3 paring knife, Dicer 4 steak knife, Dicer 7 bread knife, and Dicer 10 large slicer. ("Large" is an understatement for that last one. It has a 10-inch blade.)

TOPS runs a knife design contest with its employees each year. A chef's knife was the challenge in 2017, and Jesus Arellano's design was the winner. That was the beginning of the Dicer collection.

The Dicer 8 is no flimsy knife. It features a 7.75-inch blade, 0.090-inch thick of CPM S35VN steel. Its handle, like all in the Dicer collection, is a very attractive blue and black G10.

TOPS is famous for its robust outdoor blades and this knife follows that tradition. What I find ultimately appealing about the Dicer 8 is that it makes a seamless transition from kitchen to camp. When I'm home, I'm regularly testing one-pot recipes in the backyard with my Dutch ovens with the purpose of creating flavorful, but simple meals when on summer camping trips and in fall deer camp.

The Dicer 8, together with the Dicer 4 Steak Knife, make a good two-knife camp kitchen combo. And each of the Dicer knives comes with a black Kydex sheath, which makes transporting them safe for both you and the blade edges.

All the knives in the TOPS Dicer collection are excellent. For your first one, the Dicer 8 is a pretty good place to start.

SPECIFICATIONS

TOPS DICER 8
CHEF'S KNIFE

Overall Length: 12.25 inches

Blade Length: 7.75 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.09 inch

Blade Material: CPM-S35VN

Handle Material:

Blue and black G10

Sheath Material: Black Kydex

Weight: 9.1 ounces

(11 with sheath)

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$250

TOPSKnives.com



1:1.33 75% of
ACTUAL SIZEBUYER'S
GUIDE**01** SPYDERCO
SPYDERCO
ITAMAE FUNAYUKI**Overall Length:** 10.93 inches**Blade Length:** 6.29 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.064 inch**Blade Material:** Super Blue / SUS410**Handle Material:** Burl G10**Weight:** 4.2 ounces**Origin:** Japan**Other:** Murray Carter Collection**MSRP:** \$320**Spyderco.com****02** SPYDERCO
SPYDERCO
WAKIITA NAKIRI**Overall Length:** 12.15 inches**Blade Length:** 7.29 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.074 inch**Blade Material:** CTS-BD1N**Handle Material:** G10**Weight:** 6.3 ounces**Origin:** Japan**Other:** Murray Carter Collection**MSRP:** \$320**Spyderco.com****03** TOPS KNIVES
TOPS DICER 4
STEAK**Overall Length:** 8.5 inches**Blade Length:** 4.38 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.09 inch**Blade Material:** CPM-S35VN**Handle Material:** Blue and black G10**Sheath Material:** Black Kydex**Weight:** 5.0 ounces (5.9 with sheath)**Origin:** USA**MSRP:** \$200**TOPSKnives.com****04** BRADFORD KNIVES
BRADFORD BLUE
G-WOOD CHEF**Overall Length:** 12.5 inches**Blade Length:** 7.4 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.10 inch**Blade Material:** Bohler M390**Handle Material:** Blue G-Wood**Weight:** 5.2 ounces**Origin:** USA**MSRP:** \$249**BradfordKnives.com**

1:1.33 75% of
ACTUAL SIZE**05** CONDOR TOOL & KNIFE
**CONDOR PRIMAL
CLEAVER**

Overall Length: 7.89 inches
Blade Length: 4.09 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.12 inch
Blade Material: 1075 high carbon steel
Handle Material: Micarta
Sheath Material: Leather
Weight: 8.47 ounces
Origin: El Salvador
MSRP: \$91.78
CondorTK.com

06 BUCK KNIVES
BUCK CHEF KNIFE

Overall Length: 12.5 inches
Blade Length: 8 inches
Blade Material: 420HC stainless steel
Handle Material: DymaLux Red
 Wood
Weight: 9.1 ounces
Origin: USA
Other: Available individually or in sets
MSRP: \$80
BuckKnives.com

07 JANTZ SUPPLY
**JANTZ SUPPLY
STEAK BLADES**

Overall Length: 8.25 inches
Blade Length: 4 inches
Blade Material: 420HC
Blade Thickness: 0.06 inch
Handle Material: No handle scales;
 unfinished knife
Origin: USA
Other: Set of four
MSRP: \$19.95
Knifemaking.com

08 JANTZ SUPPLY
**JANTZ SUPPLY
PARING BLADE**

Overall Length: 7 inches
Blade Length: 3 inches
Blade Material: 420HC
Blade Thickness: 0.06 inch
Handle Material: No handle scales;
 unfinished knife
Origin: USA
Other: 3/16-inch pin holes
MSRP: \$15.95
Knifemaking.com



1:1.33 75% of
ACTUAL SIZE

09 JANTZ SUPPLY
**JANTZ SUPPLY
SANTOKU BLADE**

Overall Length: 11.25 inches

Blade Length: 6.5 inches

Blade Material: 420HC

Handle Material: No handle scales; unfinished knife

Origin: USA

Other: 3/16-inch pin holes for handle

MSRP: \$27.95

Knifemaking.com

10 JANTZ SUPPLY
**JANTZ SUPPLY
COOK'S BLADE**

Overall Length: 10.75 inches

Blade Length: 6 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.06 inch

Blade Material: 420HC

Handle Material: No handle scales; unfinished knife

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$24.95

Knifemaking.com

11 VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY
**VICTORINOX FIBROX
PRO KITCHEN**

Overall Length: 11.25 inches

Blade Length: 5.9 inches

Blade Material: Stainless steel

Handle Material: Thermoplastic elastomers (TPE)

Weight: 2.8 ounces

Origin: Switzerland

Other: Available in several colors

MSRP: \$30

SwissArmy.com

12 BENCHMADE
**BENCHMADE
STATION KNIFE**

Overall Length: 10.75 inches

Blade Length: 6 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.091-inch

Blade Material: CPM-154 or 440C

Handle Material: G10 or Richlite

Sheath Material: Plastic

Weight: 6.4 ounces
(8 ounces with sheath)

Origin: USA

Other: Customize handle color, material; blade finish, material

MSRP: Starting at \$275

Benchmade.com

TACTI

TRAIN, CARRY, STAY ALERT, STAY ALIVE

PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

WE'VE ALL THOUGHT ABOUT
IT WHEN HANDLING CERTAIN
KNIVES: "I MIGHT BE ABLE
TO USE THIS TO SAVE MY

LIFE." While a knife isn't the ideal weapon in all circumstances, with the proper training and mindset, a blade in the hands of a skilled user can be a formidable asset in helping you to stop an attack and to give you an opportunity to get out of harm's way. What exactly constitutes a tactical knife is open to discussion. Many knives listed here could just as easily have been placed in other categories. What they all have in common is the ability to provide a measure of protection.



CAL

**“...WITH THE PROPER
TRAINING AND MINDSET,
A BLADE IN THE HANDS OF
A SKILLED USER CAN BE A
FORMIDABLE ASSET...”**

RAPID REVIEW

CASE WINKLER SKINNER CAN DO IT ALL

THE WORD “TACTICAL” CAN HAVE A BROAD MEANING, BUT NORMALLY WHEN WE TALK ABOUT A “TACTICAL KNIFE,” WE’RE REFERRING TO A BLADE THAT MIGHT HAVE SELF-DEFENSE AS ONE OF ITS PURPOSES OR CAPABILITIES. As civilians going about our daily lives, we often choose a folder or small fixed blade that conceals well for that role.

Obviously, those in military or special law enforcement units might want a somewhat larger defensive tool. We ordinary folks too might choose a larger blade when concealability isn’t an issue, such as when we’re in more remote regions.

The Case Winkler Skinner is a perfect fixed-blade knife for all-around outdoor use because, while it easily can handle typical hunting and camp chores, unlike many hunting and camp knives, this knife adds true defensive capability to its repertoire.

The knife is part of the American Hero Knife Series, a collaboration between W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery and Winkler Knives. For this particular knife design, master bladesmith Daniel Winkler teamed with Kevin Holland, a retired U.S. Army Special Operator and Navy SEAL. The knife isn’t designated Skinner because that’s its function. Skinner was a nickname given to Holland when he went through the Navy Seal selection process.

The Case Winkler Skinner is 9.93 inches overall with a 5.2-inch blade, a plain edge, and a full, flat grind. It’s very sharp right out of the box. It’s designated as a trailing point, although its configuration looks to be a straight-back design. This shape gives the knife excellent penetrating properties unequaled by drop-point field knives, and better tip strength than most clip-point blades.

The steel is 80CrV2, a high carbon, chrome-vanadium workhorse steel that provides for a rugged blade that holds an edge yet is easy to sharpen. The blade has a low-profile Caswell black oxide finish. This is a full-tang knife, but the tang is skeletonized under the handle scales to shave some weight and to contribute to the knife’s excellent balance. The knife is nimble in the hand and quick to

SPECIFICATIONS

CASE WINKLER SKINNER

Overall Length:
9.63 inches

Blade Length: 5.2 inches

Blade Material: 80CrV2

Handle Material: G10

Sheath Material:
Leather with Kydex insert

Weight: 6.7 ounces

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$346.99

CaseKnives.com

recover; there’s no impression that you’re clumsily swinging an axe.

Mine came with textured Multi-Camo G10 scales that provide a seriously secure grip. It’s also available with either black walnut or smooth black canvas laminate grips. The sheath is smooth black leather with suede lining. Sandwiched between those layers is a Kydex insert that ensures the sheath will keep its shape and won’t flatten when you need to stow the knife. Another excellent feature is that the belt loop is reversible for right- or left-side carry.

I’ve had a chance to work with this knife for some time now and it’s proven to be superb in all aspects. In wild places, you can be confronted by unsavory ruffians and toothy critters. If I need to defend myself against a violent mental case or a rabid animal, I want a knife that’s capable of more than whittling a spoon. The Case Winkler Skinner is that knife.



BUYER'S
GUIDE

01 BOKER USA

BOKER
INTENTION II AUTO**Overall Length:** 7.87 inches**Closed Length:** 4.72 inches**Blade Length:** 3.15 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.11 inch**Blade Material:** D2**Handle Material:** G10**Locking Mechanism:** Push button**Weight:** 3.84 ounces**Origin:** USA**Other:** Automatic opener**MSRP:** \$59.95**BokerUSA.com**

02 OUTDOOR EDGE KNIVES/TOOLS

OUTDOOR EDGE
LE HAWK**Overall Length:** 6.2 inches**Blade Length:** 2.9 inches**Blade Material:** 8Cr14 stainless
with Blackstone finish**Handle Material:** Rubberized TPR**Sheath Material:** Polypropylene**Weight:** 3 ounces**Origin:** China**Other:** Wharncliffe blade**MSRP:** \$39.95**OutdoorEdge.com**

03 COLUMBIA RIVER KNIFE & TOOL

CRKT PROVOKE
COMPACT**Overall Length:** 6.63 inches**Closed Length:** 4.54 inches**Blade Length:** 2.26 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.15 inch**Blade Material:** D2**Handle Material:** 6061 aluminum**Locking Mechanism:** Lever lock**Weight:** 4.4 ounces**Origin:** China**Other:** Folding karambit**MSRP:** \$150**CRKT.com**

04 COLUMBIA RIVER KNIFE & TOOL CRKT SHENANIGAN

Overall Length: 8.19 inches
Closed Length: 4.86 inches
Blade Length: 3.35 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.12 inch
Blade Material: 1.4116 stainless steel
Handle Material: GRN (glass-reinforced nylon)
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 3.6 ounces
Origin: China
Other: Assisted opener
MSRP: \$79.99
CRKT.com

05 CASE KNIVES CASE KINZUA

Overall Length: 8.15 inches
Closed Length: 4.75 inches
Blade Length: 3.4 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.149 inch
Blade Material: S35VN
Handle Material: Aluminum
Locking Mechanism: Frame lock
Weight: 3.4 ounces
Origin: USA
Other: Flipper opening
MSRP: \$152.99
CaseKnives.com

06 AL MAR KNIVES AL MAR SERE 2020 3.6

Overall Length: 8.375 inches
Closed Length: 4.8 inches
Blade Length: 3.6 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.15 inch
Blade Material: D2
Handle Material: G10
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 4.7 ounces
Origin: Imported
Other: Spring assisted opener
MSRP: \$130
AlMarKnives.com





07 COLD STEEL
**COLD STEEL
AD-15 LITE**

Overall Length: 8.5 inches

Closed Length: 5 inches

Blade Length: 3.5 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.149 inch

Blade Material: AUS-10A

Handle Material: Griv-Ex

Locking Mechanism: Scorpion lock

Weight: 6.2 ounces

Origin: Taiwan

MSRP: \$159.99

ColdSteel.com

08 COLD STEEL
**COLD STEEL
CODE 4**

Overall Length: 8.5 inches

Closed Length: 5 inches

Blade Length: 3.5 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.138 inch

Blade Material: CPM-S35VN

Handle Material: 6061 aluminum

Locking Mechanism: Tri-Ad lock

Weight: 4.3 ounces

Origin: Taiwan

MSRP: \$149.99

ColdSteel.com

09 BEAR AND SON CUTLERY
BEAR EDGE 61127

Overall Length: 8 inches

Closed Length: 4.5 inches

Blade Length: 3.5 inches

Blade Material: 440 stainless

Handle Material: Aluminum

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock

Weight: 4.5 ounces

Origin: USA

Other: Spring-assisted flipper opener;
carbide glass breaker

MSRP: \$54.99

BearAndSonCutlery.com

1:1 ACTUAL SIZE

**10 BEAR AND SON CUTLERY
BEAR OPS BOLD
ACTION 14 AUTO**

Overall Length: 4.25 inches
Closed Length: 2.5 inches
Blade Length: 1.75 inches
Blade Material: 14c28n Sandvik
Handle Material: Aluminum
Locking Mechanism: Push button
Weight: 1.3 ounces
Origin: USA
Other: California legal automatic
MSRP: \$119.99
BearAndSonCutlery.com

**11 BEAR AND SON CUTLERY
BEAR & SON
A08 AUTO**

Overall Length: 6.625 inches
Closed Length: 3.875 inches
Blade Length: 2.75 inches
Blade Material: 440 stainless
Handle Material: G10, India stag (shown), or rosewood
Locking Mechanism: Back lock, EDM Precision lock
Weight: 2.9 ounces
Origin: USA
Other: Automatic opener
MSRP: Starting at \$158.75
BearAndSonCutlery.com

**12 BENCHMADE
BENCHMADE
MINI ADAMAS**

Overall Length: 7.62 inches
Closed Length: 4.37 inches
Blade Length: 3.25 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.14 inch
Blade Material: CPM CruWear
Handle Material: G10
Locking Mechanism: Axis lock
Weight: 4.6 ounces
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$250
Benchmade.com

**13 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS
GROUP) KNIVES
SOG VISION XR LTE**

Overall Length: 8.01 inches
Closed Length: 4.65 inches
Blade Length: 3.36 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.12 inch
Blade Material: CTS-XHP
Handle Material: G10
Locking Mechanism: Liner
Weight: 4.4 ounces
Origin: Taiwan
Other: Flipper and thumb studs
MSRP: \$179.95
SOGKnives.com

9"
8"
7"
6"
5"
4"
3"
2"
1"
0"



10

11

12

13

**14** SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS GROUP) KNIVES**SOG PENTAGON XR LTE****Overall Length:** 8.38 inches**Closed Length:** 4.77 inches**Blade Length:** 3.6 inches**Blade Material:** Cryo CTS-XHP**Handle Material:** G10**Locking Mechanism:** XR**Weight:** 3.2 ounces**Origin:** Taiwan**MAP*:** \$209.95**SOGKnives.com**

*MAP: Minimum advertised price

15 BENCHMADE**BENCHMADE AUTO FACT****Overall Length:** 8.74 inches**Closed Length:** 4.8 inches**Blade Length:** 3.95 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.11 inch**Blade Material:** CPM-S90V**Handle Material:** Carbon fiber and 6061 aluminum**Locking Mechanism:** Auto Axis lock**Weight:** 3.11 ounces**Origin:** USA**Other:** Automatic**MSRP:** \$400**Benchmade.com****16** BENCHMADE**BENCHMADE CLAYMORE****Overall Length:** 8.6 inches**Closed Length:** 5 inches**Blade Length:** 3.6 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.114 inch**Blade Material:** D2**Handle Material:** Grivory**Locking Mechanism:** Axis**Weight:** 3.5 ounces**Origin:** USA**MSRP:** \$230**Benchmade.com**

1:1.33 75% of
ACTUAL SIZE**17 KERSHAW KNIVES
KERSHAW
STRATA XL**

Overall Length: 12 inches
Closed Length: 6.6 inches
Blade Length: 5.4 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.130 inch
Blade Material: D2
Handle Material: G10
Locking Mechanism: Frame lock
Weight: 5.8 ounces
Origin: China
Other: Flipper opener
MSRP: \$129.99
Kershaw.KAIUSA.com

**18 SPYDERCO
SPYDERCO POLICE 4**

Overall Length: 9.97 inches
Closed Length: 5.64 inches
Blade Length: 4.38 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.118 inch
Blade Material: K390
Handle Material: FRN
 (fiberglass-reinforced nylon)
Locking Mechanism: Back lock
Weight: 4.2 ounces
Origin: Japan
Other: Four-position pocket clip
MSRP: \$235
Spyderco.com

**19 BLUE RIDGE KNIVES
LIONSTEEL
BILLY WAUGH DEMO
RYP HARSEY**

Overall Length: 9.13 inches
Closed Length: 5.25 inches
Blade Length: 3.78 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.16 inch
Blade Material: M390
Handle Material: 3D titanium
Locking Mechanism: Frame lock
Weight: 6.72 ounces
Origin: Italy
Other: RYP Design/Bill Harsey collaboration
MSRP: \$468.95
BlueRidgeKnives.com

**20 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS
GROUP) KNIVES****SOG RECONDO FX**

Overall Length: 9.6 inches
Blade Length: 4.6 inches
Blade Material: Cryo 440C
Handle Material: GRN/TPU
Sheath Material: GRN (glass-reinforced nylon)
Weight: 5.3 ounces
Origin: USA
MAP*: \$129.95
SOGKnives.com

*MAP: Minimum advertised price





21 BENCHMADE
**BENCHMADE
ADAMAS FIXED**

Overall Length: 9.17 inches

Blade Length: 4.2 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.17 inch

Blade Material: CPM CruWear

Handle Material: Bare metal
or cord wrapped

Sheath Material: PIM

Weight: 5.66 ounces

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$250

Benchmade.com

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HUNT & FISH

FIND YOUR OWN FOOD

PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

WHETHER YOU'RE TAKING TO THE FIELDS, THE WOODS, THE LAKES, OR THE STREAMS IN PURSUIT OF GAME OR FISH, YOU'LL NEED THE RIGHT **KNIVES**. There are myriad tasks to be completed in addition to field dressing, cleaning, and prepping your take before bringing it to the table. Here are some dependable blades to get the job done.

**“...IN PURSUIT OF
GAME OR FISH,
YOU’LL NEED THE
RIGHT KNIVES.”**



RAPID REVIEW

THE SPYDERCO BOW RIVER: AN EXCELLENT VALUE

KNIFE DESIGNER PHIL WILSON WAS THE COLLABORATOR ON SPYDERCO'S BOW RIVER. Wilson drew upon his experiences as an outdoorsman—as a hunter and fisherman—for this creation.

The Bow River features a full-flat-ground, trailing-point blade made from 8Cr13MoV stainless steel. It has smooth, rounded grip panels of layered black and gray G10. It's very striking and different. Whether it appeals to you or not, one thing's for sure: You won't lose it if you set it down while field dressing a deer.

It comes with a black leather belt sheath. The knife slides deeply into the sheath to keep it secure. It's a perfect size with its 3.65-inch cutting edge. It is thin, just 0.108 inch thick. Those dimensions, coupled with its slight trailing-point blade shape will make it my ideal for field dressing big game.

Its handle is sufficiently wide to be comfortable and secure in the hand during use. The grip is rounded at the butt and fits very nicely in the palm. It wasn't hunting season when I conducted my tests, so field dressing game was out of the question. But I did thaw some beef steaks and the Bow River performed well cutting those into strips. I also used it to slice wood shavings that I use typically

to start the twig stove I made from an aluminum can.

Some might choose a more robust knife if a knife is your only tool. But pair the Bow River with a hatchet and folding saw and there isn't much you can't do when it comes to living outside. I'm a big proponent of that three-tool kit. The Bow River, with a suggested retail price of \$54, is a great value.

SPECIFICATIONS

SPYDERCO BOW RIVER

Overall Length: 8.14 inches

Blade Length: 4.36 inches

Edge Length: 3.65 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.108 inch

Blade Material: 8Cr13MoV

Blade Configuration: Trailing point

Grind: Full flat

Handle: G10

Sheath: Leather with belt loop

Weight: 3.8 ounces

MSRP: \$54

Spyderco.com



BUYER'S GUIDE

01 KNIVES OF ALASKA

KNIVES OF ALASKA PRO BONING

Overall Length: 9.625 inches

Blade Length: 5 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.065 inch

Blade Material: D2

Handle Material: Suregrip

Sheath Material: Boltaron

Weight: 4.2 ounces

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$49.99

KnivesOfAlaska.com

02 KNIVES OF ALASKA

KNIVES OF ALASKA ALPHA WOLF

Overall Length: 8 inches

Blade Length: 3 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.11 inch

Blade Material: D2

Handle Material: Suregrip

Sheath Material: Leather

Weight: 2.9 ounces

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$84.99

KnivesOfAlaska.com

03 KNIVES OF ALASKA

KNIVES OF ALASKA FEATHERLIGHT HUNTER

Overall Length: 7.5 inches

Closed Length: 4.18 inches

Blade Length: 2.75 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.1 inch

Blade Material: D2

Handle Material: G10

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$89.99

KnivesOfAlaska.com

1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE**04 GERBER GEAR****GERBER RANDY
NEWBERG DTS****Overall Length:** 8.9 inches**Blade Lengths:** 3.75 and 2.1 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.08 inch**Blade Material:** 440C primary,
D2 second blade**Handle Material:** GF nylon
with TPE overmold**Locking Mechanism:** Back lock**Sheath Material:** Nylon**Weight:** 6.6 ounces**Origin:** Imported**Other:** Reflective patch for
locating in the dark**MSRP:** \$60**GerberGear.com****05 OUTDOOR EDGE KNIVES/TOOLS****OUTDOOR EDGE
RAZORBONE****Overall Length:** 10.8 inches
(with largest blade)**Closed Length:** 5.8 inches**Blade Lengths:** 5 inches (boning), 3.5
inches (drop point), 3.4 inches (gutting)**Blade Material:** 420J2 stainless**Handle Material:** Grivory with
TPR inserts**Locking Mechanism:** Back lock**Sheath Material:** Nylon**Weight:** 3.1 ounces**Origin:** Japan**Other:** Includes six exchangeable
blades (three drop point, two boning,
one gutting)**MSRP:** \$64.95**OutdoorEdge.com****06 BENCHMADE****TOPS FILET****Overall Length:** 11.5 inches**Blade Length:** 8 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.09 inch**Blade Material:** 154CM**Handle Material:** Tan/black G10**Sheath Material:** OD green Kydex**Weight:** 4.2 ounces (7.3 with sheath)**Origin:** USA**MSRP:** \$215**TOPSKnives.com**



07 VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY
**VICTORINOX
HUNTER PRO ALOX**

Overall Length: 9.125 inches

Closed Length: 5.25 inches

Blade Length: 4 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.108 inch

Blade Material: Stainless steel

Handle Material: Alox

Locking Mechanism: Back lock

Weight: 6.6 ounces

Origin: Switzerland

Other: Paracord lanyard

MSRP: \$99.99

Victorinox.com

08 ONTARIO KNIFE CO.
**ONTARIO (OKC)
TAK 2**

Overall Length: 9.9 inches

Blade Length: 4.2 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.188 inch

Blade Material: 1075 carbon steel

Handle Material:

Stabilized hardwood

Sheath Material: Leather

Weight: 0.6 pound

Origin: USA

MSRP: \$129.95

OntarioKnife.com

1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE**09 BENCHMADE
BENCHMADE
MEATCRAFTER**

Overall Length: 11.06 inches
Blade Length: 6.08 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.09 inch
Blade Material: CPM-154
Handle Material: Santoprene
Sheath Material: Boltaron
Weight: 3.24 ounces
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$160
Benchmade.com

**10 COLD STEEL
COLD STEEL DOUBLE
SAFE HUNTER**

Overall Length: 8.375 inches
Closed Length: 4.875 inches
Blade Length: 3.5 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.118 inch
Blade Material: 8Cr13MoV
Handle Material: Glass-filled nylon
Locking Mechanism: Back lock,
secondary rocker lock
Weight: 4.1 ounces
Origin: Imported
MSRP: \$44.99
ColdSteel.com

**11 ONTARIO KNIFE CO.
ONTARIO (OKC)
HIKING KNIFE**

Overall Length: 8.2 inches
Blade Length: 3.4 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.125 inch
Blade Material: 420HC
Handle Material: Micarta
Sheath Material: Leather
Weight: 5.6 ounces (7.2 with sheath)
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$89.95
OntarioKnife.com

**12 BENCHMADE
BENCHMADE STEEP
COUNTRY**

Overall Length: 7.76 inches
Blade Length: 3.54 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.121 inch
Blade Material: CPM-S30V
Handle Material: Santoprene
Sheath Material: Boltaron
Weight: 3 ounces
Origin: USA
MSRP: \$130
Benchmade.com





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Knives

ILLUSTRATED

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BUDGET BLADES

GOOD KNIVES AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

NOT ALL GOOD KNIVES COST A MORTGAGE PAYMENT. If you're like us, you stash knives everywhere: in the glove compartment or center console of your vehicle, in your toolbox, in your daypack, in your tackle box, in your range bag, in your survival kit. Good quality blades at reasonable prices are great for places like these so you'll always have a knife when you need one without worrying about it getting lost, stolen, or damaged. Here are some choices that won't break the bank.



**“...ALWAYS
HAVE A KNIFE
WHEN YOU NEED
ONE WITHOUT
WORRYING
ABOUT IT
GETTING
LOST, STOLEN,
OR DAMAGED.”**

RAPID REVIEW

GERBER ZILCH IS A GREAT VALUE

ARE YOU KIDDING ME? This Gerber Zilch is only \$21? I think I'll buy several. This would be a great knife at twice the price. The Zilch measures 4.1 inches closed and weighs a mere 2.2 ounces. Combined with its narrow profile, it's excellent to carry in a pocket.

The blade is made of 7Cr stainless steel with a stonewashed finish and is 3.1 inches long and a narrow 3/4-inch at its widest measurement. It's a plain edge with a drop-point configuration and a pointy tip. It opens one-handed with either hand via the dual thumb studs. There are also long grooves on each side of the blade that can serve as nail nicks. The blade locks up solidly with its simple liner lock.

The Zilch has a glass-filled nylon handle that's going to be very durable unless you drop it in a campfire and you melt it. That handle has some texturing to it too, but not so much as to be abrasive. The handle on mine is a drab red, which I really like. And it looks especially nice with the black thumb studs, liner, and spacers. The knife is also available with a coyote handle or a black handle. At the top of each handle scale is an interesting set of "teeth" that mesh together to form a zig-zag pattern when the two scales are assembled.

There is an oblong lanyard hole and a steel pocket clip with a finish that matches the blade. The pocket clip is set up for right-side, tip-up carry only, but, hey, what do you want for \$21? Most important, the knife locks tightly with no wobble, the blade is very sharp, and it cuts very well. There will be those who turn up their noses at the Zilch because it isn't made of one of the super steels with a titanium handle. But it'll accomplish the same things as a knife that will cost \$100 more. And I'll bet you can think of other things to do with that \$100.

SPECIFICATIONS

GERBER ZILCH

Overall Length: 7.2 inches

Closed Length: 4.1 inches

Blade Length: 3.1 inches

Blade Thickness: 0.102 inch

Blade Material: 7Cr stainless

Handle Material: Glass-filled nylon

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock

Weight: 2.2 ounces

Origin: Imported

Other: Pocket clip for right-side, tip-up carry only

MSRP: \$21

GerberGear.com



BUYER'S
GUIDE**01** VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY
**VICTORINOX
CLASSIC SD****Overall Length:** 3.68 inches**Closed Length:** 2.3 inches**Blade Length:** 1.38 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.039 inch**Blade Material:** Stainless steel**Handle Material:** ABS/Cellidor**Locking Mechanism:** Slipjoint**Weight:** 0.7 ounce**Origin:** Switzerland**Other:** Knife blade, file, flat screwdriver, scissors, toothpick, tweezers, keyring**MSRP:** \$16.99**SwissArmy.com****02** VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY
**VICTORINOX
CLASSIC SD ALOX****Overall Length:** 3.68 inches**Closed Length:** 2.3 inches**Blade Length:** 1.38 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.039 inch**Blade Material:** Stainless steel**Handle Material:** Alox**Locking Mechanism:** Slipjoint**Weight:** 0.6 ounce**Origin:** Switzerland**Other:** Knife blade, nail file, flat screwdriver, scissors, keyring**MSRP:** \$28.99**SwissArmy.com****03** VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY
**VICTORINOX
PIONEER X ALOX****Overall Length:** 6.14 inches**Closed Length:** 3.66 inches**Blade Length:** 2.48 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.078 inch**Blade Material:** Stainless steel**Handle Material:** Alox**Locking Mechanism:** Slipjoint**Weight:** 3.3 ounces**Origin:** Switzerland**Other:** Knife blade, scissors, awl, can opener, bottle opener, wire stripper, two flat screwdrivers, keyring**MSRP:** \$69.99**SwissArmy.com**

1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE**04 SPYDERCO**
SPYDERCO ROADIE
COYOTE, OLIVE

Overall Length: 5.08 inches
Closed Length: 2.99 inches
Blade Length: 2.09 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.112 inch
Blade Material: N690Co
Handle Material: FRN
 (fiberglass-reinforced nylon)
Locking Mechanism: Slipjoint
Weight: 1 ounce
Origin: Italy
MSRP: \$80
Spyderco.com

05 GERBER GEAR
GERBER FUSE

Overall Length: 8.23 inches
Closed Length: 4.86 inches
Blade Length: 3.37 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.106 inch
Blade Material: Stainless steel
Handle Material: Stainless steel
 with nylon insert
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 2.83 ounces
Origin: China
MSRP: \$33
GerberGear.com

06 GERBER GEAR
GERBER Highbrow

Overall Length: 7.9 inches
Closed Length: 4.5 inches
Blade Length: 3.4 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.0985 inch
Blade Material: 7Cr17MoV
Handle Material: Aluminum
Locking Mechanism: Sliding blade lock
Weight: 5.79 ounces
Origin: China
Other: Assisted opener with flipper
MSRP: \$55
GerberGear.com



04

05

06

07 COLUMBIA RIVER KINFE & TOOL
CRKT MINIMALIST PERSIAN

Overall Length: 5.81 inches
Blade Length: 2.76 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.13 inch
Blade Material: 8Cr13MoV
Handle Material: Micarta
Sheath Material: Polypropylene
Weight: 2 ounces
Origin: China
MSRP: \$39.99
CRKT.com

08 COLUMBIA RIVER KINFE & TOOL
CRKT KITH

Overall Length: 6.75 inches
Closed Length: 3.78 inches
Blade Length: 2.95 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.11 inch
Blade Material: 8Cr13MoV
Handle Material: Glass-reinforced nylon
Locking Mechanism: Front lock
Weight: 2.30 ounces
Origin: China
MSRP: \$44.99
CRKT.com

09 RANDALL'S ADVENTURE & TRAINING
BRK CHURP

Overall Length: 6.25 inches
Closed Length: 3.62 inches
Blade Length: 2.7 inches
Blade Thickness: 0.078 inch
Blade Material: D2
Handle Material: Micarta
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 2.1 ounces
Other: Designed by ESEE/Randall's Adventure & Training
Origin: China
MSRP: \$29.95
BlueRidgeKnives.com

1:1
ACTUAL
SIZE**10** OUTDOOR EDGE KNIVES/TOOLS**OUTDOOR EDGE
RAZORWORK****Overall Length:** 7.1 inches**Closed Length:** 4.1 inches**Blade Length:** 3 inches**Blade Material:** 420J2 stainless**Handle Material:** Grivory**Locking Mechanism:** Back lock**Weight:** 1.9 ounces**Origin:** Japan**Other:** Includes three exchangeable blades: two utility, one drop point**MSRP:** \$30.95**OutdoorEdge.com****11** BUCK KNIVES**BUCK LANGFORD****Overall Length:** 7.875 inches**Closed Length:** 4.5 inches**Blade Length:** 3.375 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.110 inches**Blade Material:** 7Cr stainless**Handle Material:** G10**Locking Mechanism:** Liner lock**Weight:** 3.7 ounces**Origin:** China**Other:** Stainless steel pocket clip**MSRP:** \$29.99**BuckKnives.com****12** KA-BAR KNIVES**KA-BAR/BK&T
BECKER FOLDER
(BK40)****Overall Length:** 8.5 inches**Closed Length:** 5 inches**Blade Length:** 3.559 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.138 inch**Blade Material:** AUS-8A stainless**Handle Material:** GRN-PA66**Locking Mechanism:** Liner lock**Weight:** 4.8 ounces**Origin:** China**MSRP:** \$53.81**KABAR.com**

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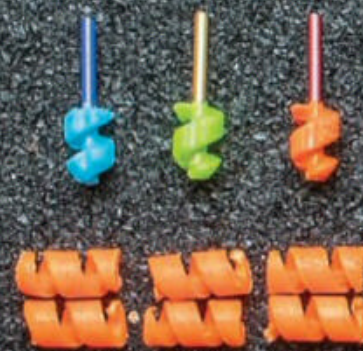
ACCESS

CARRY ON AND STAY SHARP

PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

NATURALLY, WE DON'T CARRY ONLY KNIVES. As people who pride ourselves on our self-reliance, we own and regularly use many other items. First, we need the tools to keep our edged tools sharp. And there are add-ons to our knives and sheaths, survival gear to add to our kits, as well as great bags to carry our blades and other gear. Here, then, are some accessories to consider for the knife enthusiast.

"... AS PEOPLE WHO PRIDE OURSELVES ON OUR SELF-RELIANCE, WE OWN AND REGULARLY USE MANY OTHER ITEMS... ADD-ONS TO OUR KNIVES AND SHEATHS ..."



ORIES



RAPID REVIEW

ALWAYS HANDY: VICTORINOX DUAL KNIFE SHARPENER

WHILE I HAVE SEVERAL GOOD KNIFE SHARPENING SYSTEMS AT HOME, I USUALLY HAVE SOMETHING MORE PORTABLE AND CONVENIENT IN MY BAGS AND PACKS.

As I travel by car on multi-day trips quite often, I have outfitted my vehicle with a small assortment of hand tools and a daypack with some camping/hiking supplies. I often stay in campgrounds rather than hotels and cook my own meals in rest areas rather than fatten up on fast food. I have knives and other pieces of gear tucked in just about every storage compartment of my car.

In the center console is a Victorinox Dual Knife Sharpener. It's about the size of a ballpoint pen. It even has a pocket clip if you're so inclined to slip it into a shirt pocket. As the name implies, it's really two sharpeners in one.

To use the sharpener, remove the bottom of the plastic case to reveal a sharpening stone about 3.25 inches long. Stroke each side of your knife edge along one of the wide edges of the stone, being careful to maintain the same angle with each pass. The narrow side edges can be used—if you're careful—to touch up the teeth on a serrated edge. There's a groove in each of the wide sides of the stone to sharpen fishhooks and pointy things, such as darts or awls.

By removing the cap of the sharpener, you gain access to a sharpening slot with two ceramic discs crisscrossed to form a "V" angle. This ceramic sharpener is a pull-through design that doesn't require any amount of practice to maintain a uniform angle when sharpening. It's a good choice when doing a quick touch-up to an edge that doesn't require much work or as a finishing touch after sharpening first on the stone.

No, you're not going to sharpen an axe or machete with this sharpener. But for most small pocketknives, this lightweight, compact little sharpener does a good job. This sharpener was made in Germany, even though Victorinox is a Swiss company. And because it's Victorinox, you know it was designed with the Swiss Army Knife in mind. For a traveler such as myself, having a Swiss Army Knife and this sharpener, my job of packing for my next trip is already off to a good start.

SPECIFICATIONS

VICTORINOX DUAL KNIFE SHARPENER

What It Is:

Pocket-sized knife sharpener

Includes: Honing stone with fishhook groove, V-shaped ceramic discs, pocket clip

Case Material: ABS/Cellidor

Length: 5.7 inches

Weight: 1.4 ounces

Origin: Germany

MSRP: \$17.50

SwissArmy.com
or **Victorinox.com**





01



03



02



05

BUYER'S GUIDE

01 WORK SHARP TOOLS

WORK SHARP PRECISION ADJUST SHARPENER

What It Is: Manual, angle-guided, three-sided abrasive jig-and-clamp knife sharpener

Features: Adjustable sharpening angles from 15 to 30 degrees in 1-degree increments, quickly index between coarse (320 grit) diamond, fine (600 grit) diamond, and fine ceramic stone sharpeners, removable clamp, bench-top base, sharpening slide rod

MSRP: \$59.95

WorkSharpTools.com

02 WORK SHARP TOOLS

WORK SHARP KNIFE & TOOL SHARPENER MK.2

What It Is: Electric-powered belt sharpener

Features: Flexible abrasive belts conform to any blade shape, switch between high and low sharpening speeds, adjustable angle guide with scratch-resistant leather lining, works on all knives, including serrated edges, household scissors (not salon-grade shears), lawnmower blades, axes, garden tools

Includes: 20- and 25-degree sharpening guide, 65-degree scissor guide, two P80 coarse abrasive belts, two P220 medium abrasive belts, two 6000 fine abrasive belts, user guide

MSRP: \$99.95

WorkSharpTools.com

03 VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY

VICTORINOX MINI TOOL FIREANT SET

What It Is: On-board fire-starting kit for Swiss Army Knife

Included: Three mini ferro rods, six helix-shaped tinder pieces

Fits: One ferro rod and one tinder helix screw into corkscrew of Swiss Army Knife

Length: 1.1 inches

Weight: 0.2 ounce

MSRP: \$35

SwissArmy.com or Victorinox.com

05 FLEXCUT TOOLS

FLEXCUT DUAL-SIDED PADDLE STROP

What It Is: Leather strop to smooth edges on hardened steel

Stropping Surfaces: 10 x 3 inches, rough leather and smooth leather

Origin: USA

Other: Includes 1-ounce bar of Flexcut Gold Polishing Compound

MSRP: \$39.95

Flexcut.com

04 LANSKY SHARPENERS

LANSKY C-CLIP COMBO

What It Is: Knife sharpening kit, sharpens knives, fishhooks, darts, arrowheads, needles, more

Includes: Lansky C-Clip ceramic sharpener, Lansky Mini ceramic sharpener, Lansky Eraser Block for cleaning ceramic rods

Features: Both sharpeners feature 1000-grit ceramic rods, C-Clip rods set at 20-degree sharpening angle, Mini pull-through sharpener has large and small blade openings with 22.5-degree sharpening angle

MSRP: \$18.99

Lansky.com

BACKGROUND IMAGE IN THIS SECTION: OMESAMONG/DEPOSITPHOTOS.COM

04

07 SPYDERCO SPYDERCO TRI-ANGLE SHARPMAKER

What It Is: Angled ceramic rod knife sharpening system to sharpen knives (including serrated), scissors, awls, other tools

Includes: ABS plastic base that doubles as storage case, holes in base to set angle at either 30 degrees (15 each side) or 40 degrees (20 each side), two sets of high alumina ceramic stone rods (brown medium grit rods and white fine grit rods), metal safety rods to protect hands

MSRP: \$108

Spyderco.com

08 SPYDERCO SPYDERCO MESSENGER BAG

What It Is: Envoy-19 messenger bag made for Spyderco by Vanquest

Construction: 1000d and 500d Cordura nylon with YKK zippers

Inside Dimensions:

10.5 x 18 x 6.5 inches

Features: Fits up to 17-inch laptop or tablet, 22 pockets and slots to keep things organized, including a loop-lined concealed carry compartment, collapsible bottle compartments at each end for 32-ounce Nalgene bottles, main flap with embroidered Spyderco logos inside and outside, main flap secures with two quick-release buckles, removable shoulder strap with curved shoulder pad, padded laptop sleeve, top pass-through carry handle. Available only on Spyderco website or at Spyderco factory outlet

MSRP: \$189.99

Spyderco.com

09 SPYDERCO SPYDERCO ROUND BEAD WITH LANYARD

What It Is: Lanyard/fob with round bead for attachment to knife handle

Includes: 7-inch lanyard of nylon para-chute cord configured in round-weave pattern, round Spyderco bead cast from genuine pewter with Spyderco "bug" logo on four sides

MSRP: \$40

Spyderco.com

10 SPYDERCO SPYDERCO BANDANA

What It Is: Cloth bandana

Construction: 100% cotton

Dimensions: 26.5 x 26.5 inches

Features: Red bandana with black Spyderco "bugs." Also available as black bandana with red "bugs." Available only on Spyderco website or at Spyderco factory outlet

MSRP: \$10

Spyderco.com

06

07

08

09

10

06 BEAR AND SON CUTLERY GATCO ARKANSAS TRI-HONE SHARPENING SYSTEM

What It Is: Three-stone knife sharpening system for straight-edge blades and tools

Includes: Coarse silicon carbide stone, 100% natural Arkansas medium stone, 100% natural Arkansas fine stone, natural wood triangle mounting base

Dimensions: 6 x 1.7 x 0.5 inches

Weight: 2 pounds, 1 ounce

MSRP: \$46.25

BearAndSonCutlery.com



11 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS GROUP) KNIVES SOG SURREPT/ 04 CS WAISTPACK

What It Is: EDC waist pack with weapon compartment
Construction: 4200 ripstop nylon
Volume: 4 liters
Dimensions: 7 x 9.5 x 4.5 inches
Color: Steel blue with frost highlights
Features: Adjustable waist belt, two main zippered compartments: one felt lined for CCW with twin lockable zippers, the other with inside divider pockets, outside slip pocket, small slip and zippered pockets on waistbelt, elastic bands inside of waistbelt suitable for clipping a knife, top carry handle, padded back panel
Origin: Vietnam
MSRP: \$59.95
SOGKnives.com

12 SPYDERCO SPYDERCO G-CLIP SHEATH MOUNT

What It Is: G-clip and mounting hardware to attach belt clip to a knife sheath
Includes: G-clip, two stainless steel Chicago screw sets (T-10 Torx wrench needed), two rubber washers.
Features: G-clip has numerous mounting holes to set up sheath for vertical, horizontal carry as well as forward or reverse cants and inside or outside the waistband. G-clip fits belts up to 1.5 inches wide and can be used as a spring clip directly onto clothing.
MSRP: \$15
Spyderco.com



12



13

13 ESEE KNIVES ESEE MESS TIN KIT

What It Is: Survival kit contained in cooking tin
Container: Randall's Adventure & Training large aluminum mess tin with handle and lid for cooking, purifying water
Dimensions: 6.25 x 4 x 2.5 inches
Kit Contents: ESEE Cadiru knife, pocket map card set, survival card set, Victorinox Hiker Swiss Army Knife, Potable Aqua tablets, Suunto compass, Kevlar line (100-foot spool), snare wire, basic fishing kit, Tinder Quik Fire Tabs, Rapid Rescue whistle, duct tape, Fresnel lens, 10 feet orange survey tape, 30 feet small cordage, pencil, two Brite Strike Lites, waterproof matches, signal mirror, large fire steel, emergency water bags, two sewing needles, Cordura repair patch
Weight: 25 ounces
MSRP: \$287.60
ESEKnives.com

14 ESEE KNIVES ADVANCED SURVIVAL KIT

What It Is: Soft-sided, zippered pack/bag with comprehensive survival gear included
Container: Cordura 1000d nylon bag, made in USA, blaze orange or olive drab with detachable map case, carry straps
Dimensions: 7 x 12 x 8 inches
Kit Contents: Snare wire, fishing kit, Tinder Quik Fire Tabs, Rapid Rescue orange whistle, Pocket Spiral Saw (wire saw), duct tape, Fresnel lens, 10 feet orange survey tape, 30 feet small cordage, pencil, two ranger bands, two Brite Strike Green APALS Lights, H-bandage, nav card set, survival card set, Rite in the Rain nav/survival notepad, ESEE-4P special edition knife, Potable Aqua tablets, Victorinox Hiker Swiss Army Knife, mess tin with handle and top, Suunto A10 compass, quick disconnect key ring, four 1-quart water bags, two survival blankets, waterproof matches, signal mirror, Utility Flame 2-Pack, Large fire steel, 25 feet 8 mm load-rated Prusik cord, 24 Kn load-rated carabiner, Petzl Tikkin Headlamp, spare AAA batteries, Kevlar trip line spool (100 feet), two sewing needles with Cordura patch, two 1.5 mil 45-gallon yellow trash bags, ESEE patch, signal panel/bag/tarp (60 x 60 inches)
Weight: 5 pounds
MSRP: \$727.76
ESEKnives.com



14

MULTI- TOOLS

TAKE-ALONG TOOLS IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

PHOTOS BY LARRY ATIL

SOMETIMES YOU NEED A TOOL THAT DOES MORE THAN CUT AND SLICE. Multitools are pocket-sized problem solvers that you can take with you wherever you go. They come in an ever-increasing range of shapes and sizes, some with just a few tools and others with most every gadget you can imagine. So, put on your work boots, grab your favorite multitool, and be ready to be the person everyone turns to when something needs to be fixed.



“...POCKET-SIZED PROBLEM SOLVERS THAT YOU CAN TAKE WITH YOU WHEREVER YOU GO.”

RAPID REVIEW

LIGHTWEIGHT CARRY: GERBER ARMBAR SLIM-DRIVE

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INCLINED TO CHOOSE MULTITOOLS WITH A TRUCKLOAD OF TOOLS.

Heaven forbid I religiously carry a lesser multitool every day and, as fate would have it, it turns out it's missing the one tool I need when I'm trying to accomplish an emergency repair in the field. One thing I usually look for right away is a can opener because I've used one far more often than the ever-present bottle opener.

The trouble with that all-or-nothing attitude about multitools is that more often, instead of carrying it all, I end up carrying nothing. Elaborate multitools can be heavy to carry in a pocket and might not make the weight limit I impose on my pack either when I consider all the other gear I might need on my travels.

The Gerber Armbar Slim multitools are lightweight alternatives. The Armbar Slim-Drive I've been using recently is simple and small, but still very useful. It has a single sheepfoot knife blade with liner lock, a foldout bottle opener that can also be used for light prying, and a folding bit driver with one two-sided ¼-inch bit included. The bit features a flat screwdriver on one side and a Phillips screwdriver on the other. The knife blade is 2.5 inches long with a plain edge and a hole for one-handed opening. The blade on mine—an early model—was a bit stiff to open.

The bit driver, the armbar for which the tool is named, extends the reach of the tool by an extra 2 inches. That solves a failing found in many other multitools with stubby little screwdrivers that are unable to reach the screw to be turned. The tools are contained in an aluminum housing only 3.8 inches long overall. There's a small keyring included. That might be most useful for attaching it with a carabiner to a pack. The tool weighs just 2.5 ounces. My tool is burnt orange in color. Other options are onyx and burnt bronze.

So, you don't have a screw loose? Gerber also offers the Armbar Slim-Cut (also shown in this multitools section), which features a pair of scissors in place of the bit driver. The Gerber Armbar Slim-Drive might not be able to solve all the problems you might face in a day. But it will help with quite a few more than you could handle if you left your heavy multitool home.

SPECIFICATIONS

GERBER ARMBAR SLIM-DRIVE

Closed Length: 3.8 inches

Blade Length: 2.5 inches

Handle Material: Aluminum

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock

Weight: 2.5 ounces

Origin: China

Tools: Sheepfoot knife blade, bottle opener, swing-out bit driver, two-sided bit with Phillips and flat screwdrivers

MSRP: \$34

GerberGear.com



BUYER'S GUIDE

01 LEATHERMAN TOOL GROUP

LEATHERMAN FREE K4

Closed Length: 4.5 inches

Blade Length: 3.3 inches

Blade Material: 420HC

Overall Thickness: 0.77 inch

Weight: 5.5 ounces

Origin: USA

Tools: Knife, spring-action scissors, pry tool, package opener, awl, bottle opener, Phillips screwdriver, small and medium flat screwdrivers

Other: All tools lock

MSRP: \$89.95

Leatherman.com

02 LEATHERMAN TOOL GROUP

LEATHERMAN SKELETOOL KBX

Overall Length: 5.87 inches

Closed Length: 3.45 inches

Blade Length: 2.6 inches

Blade Material: 420HC

Handle Material: Stainless steel

Locking Mechanism: Liner lock

Overall Thickness: 0.3 inch

Weight: 1.3 ounces

Origin: USA

Tools: Locking partially serrated knife blade, integral bottle opener on pocket clip

MSRP: \$29.95

Leatherman.com

03 VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY

VICTORINOX CLIMBER WOOD SWISS SPIRIT

Closed Length: 3.6 inches

Blade Length: 2.5 inches (large blade)

Blade Material: Stainless steel

Handle Material: Walnut

Weight: 2.9 ounces

Origin: Switzerland

Tools: Large knife, small knife, can opener, bottle opener, wire stripper, reamer/punch/sewing awl, scissors, corkscrew, 3 mm and 6 mm flat screwdrivers, multipurpose hook, keyring

MSRP: \$80

SwissArmy.com or Victorinox.com

1:1.33 75% of
ACTUAL SIZE**04 GERBER GEAR
GERBER CENTER
DRIVE PLUS****Overall Length:** 6.6 inches**Closed Length:** 4.7 inches**Blade Length:** 3.25 inches**Blade Thickness:** 0.09 inch**Blade Material:** 420HC**Handle Material:** Stainless steel**Locking Mechanism:** Jaw: push/
slide; blade and driver: frame lock;
internal tools: wedge lock (slide lock)**Sheath Material:** Leather**Weight:** 9.5 ounces**Origin:** USA**Tools:** Spring-loaded needle-nose pliers,
wire cutters, wire strippers, partially serrated
knife blade, center-axis bit driver, Phillips/
flat screwdriver bit, prybar/nail puller/bottle
opener, awl, file, spring-action scissors**MSRP:** \$130**GerberGear.com****05 VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY
VICTORINOX
SWISS CHAMP****Closed Length:** 3.6 inches**Blade Length:** 2.5 inches**Blade Material:** Stainless steel**Handle Material:** ABS/Cellidor**Weight:** 6.5 ounces**Origin:** Switzerland**Tools:** Large knife; small knife; can
opener; bottle opener; wire stripper;
reamer/punch/sewing awl; scissors;
multipurpose hook; pliers; wire crimper;
fish scaler; hook disgorging; ruler; wood
saw; nail file/cleaner; metal file; metal
saw; 2.5 mm, 3 mm, and 6 mm screw-
drivers; Phillips screwdriver; magnifying
glass; chisel; pressurized ballpoint pen;
stainless steel pin; corkscrew; mini
screwdriver; and keyring**MSRP:** \$87.99**SwissArmy.com or Victorinox.com****06 LEATHERMAN TOOL GROUP
LEATHERMAN BOND****Overall Length:** 6.5 inches**Closed Length:** 4 inches**Blade Length:** 2.9 inches**Blade Material:** 420HC**Handle Material:** Stainless steel**Overall Thickness:** 0.56 inch**Weight:** 6.21 ounces**Origin:** USA**Tools:** Needle-nose and regular pliers, wire
cutters, wire stripper, knife blade, awl, can
opener, bottle opener, wood/metal file,
Phillips screwdriver, small and medium flat
screwdrivers, ruler, lanyard ring**MSRP:** \$49.95**Leatherman.com**



07

**07 LEATHERMAN TOOL GROUP
LEATHERMAN CURL**

Overall Length: 6.25 inches
Closed Length: 4 inches
Blade Length: 2.9 inches
Blade Material: 420HC
Handle Material: Stainless steel
Overall Thickness: 0.6 inch
Weight: 7.5 ounces
Sheath Material: Nylon
Origin: USA

Tools: Needle-nose and regular pliers, bit driver with Phillips bit, wire cutters, wire stripper, locking knife blade, scissors, awl, can opener, bottle opener, wood/metal file, medium flat screwdriver, ruler

MSRP: \$79.95

Leatherman.com



**08 GERBER GEAR
GERBER ARMBAR
SLIM-CUT**

Closed Length: 3.8 inches
Blade Length: 2.5 inches
Handle Material: Aluminum
Locking Mechanism: Liner lock
Weight: 2.1 ounces
Origin: China

Tools: Sheepfoot knife blade, bottle opener, scissors

MSRP: \$34

GerberGear.com

**09 SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS
GROUP) KNIVES
SOG FLASH MT**

Overall Length: 5.6 inches
Closed Length: 3.4 inches
Blade Length: 2.4 inches
Blade Material: Cryo D2
Handle Material: Stainless steel with black oxide finish
Weight: 4.7 ounces
Origin: Taiwan

Tools: Compound leverage pliers, wire cutter, knife, bottle opener, large screwdriver, bit driver, two-sided bit (Phillips and flat screwdrivers), magnetic bit holder

MAP*: \$69.95

SOGKnives.com

*MAP: Minimum Advertised Price

1:1.33 75% of
ACTUAL SIZE**10** SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS GROUP) **KNIVES****SOG MACV TOOL****Dimensions:** 2.5 x 1.5 inches**Material:** 420HC steel with black finish**Weight:** 0.6 ounce**Origin:** China**Tools:** Pry bar, bottle opener, small and large flat screwdrivers, small Phillips driver, line cutter, blade sharpener, 1/4" wrench, 5/16" wrench, 3/8" wrench, 1/4" hex bit driver, lanyard/keychain hole**MSRP:** \$11.99**SOGKnives.com****11** SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS GROUP) **KNIVES****SOG PARASHEARS RED****Blade Material:** 3Cr13**Handle Material:** Glass-reinforced nylon (GRN)**Weight:** 4.8 ounces**Origin:** China**Tools:** Compound leverage shears, strap cutter, glass breaker, oxygen wrench, tweezers, medium flat screwdriver, Phillips driver, ruler, bottle opener, awl**MSRP:** \$74.95**SOGKnives.com****12** SOG (STUDIES & OBSERVATIONS GROUP) **KNIVES****SOG POWERACCESS ASSIST****Overall Length:** 6.82 inches**Closed Length:** 4.54 inches**Blade Length:** 2.74 inches**Blade Material:** 5Cr15MoV**Handle Material:** Stainless steel**Sheath Material:** Nylon**Weight:** 10.7 ounces**Origin:** Taiwan**Tools:** Compound leverage needle-nose pliers, assisted plain blade, assisted serrated blade, chisel, awl, 1/4-inch bit driver, 12-piece hex bit kit, assisted saw, gripper, soft wire cutter, can opener/small flat screwdriver, Phillips driver, bottle opener/large flat screwdriver, jewelry driver, assisted hook cutter, wire crimper, bevel gauge, ruler**MSRP:** \$89.95**SOGKnives.com**

REDI FOR EVERY DAY

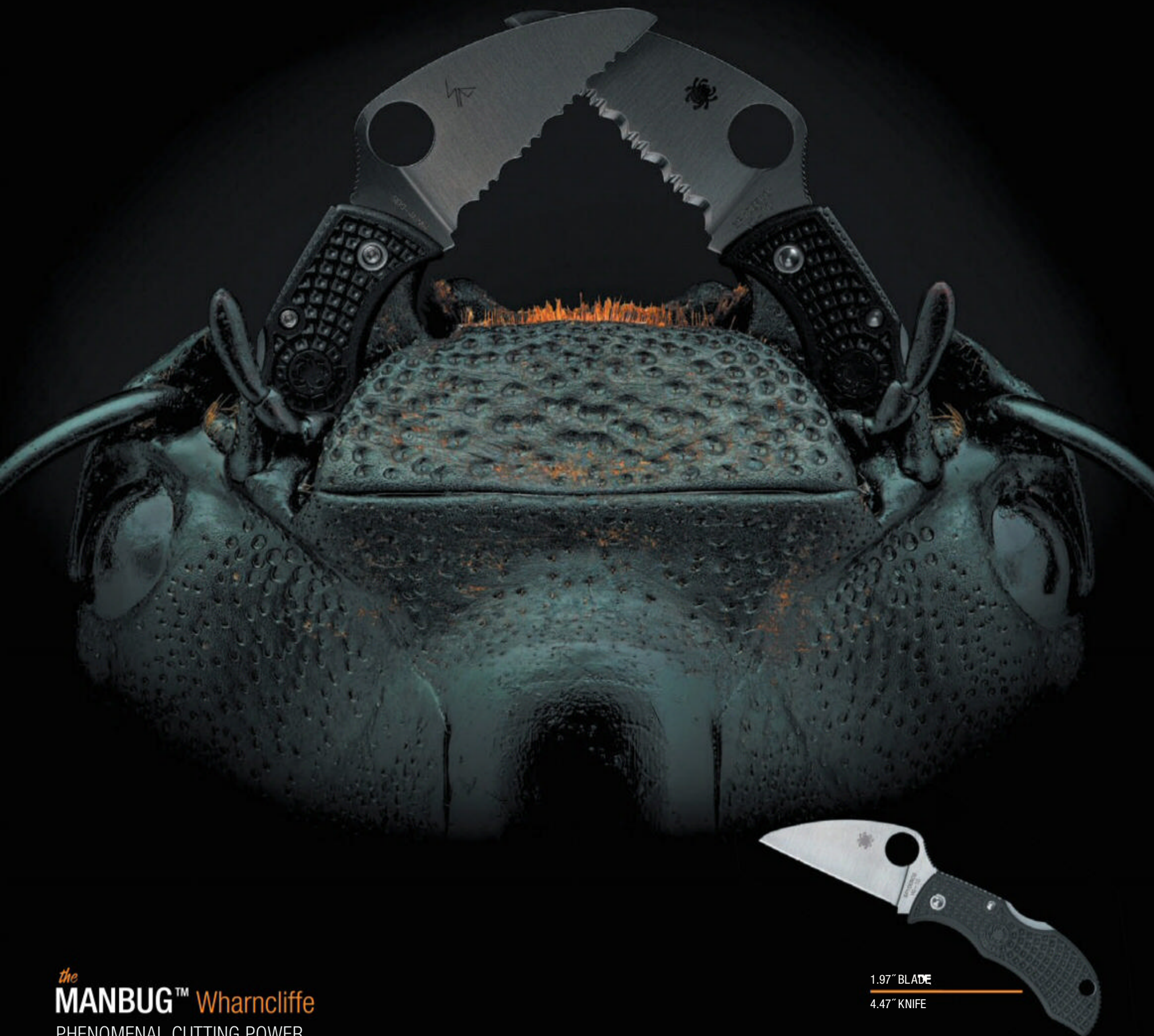


THE NEW HAVALON REDI

It took over three years of R&D to create the first Havalon EDC. The REDI features the all new REDI-Lock replaceable blade system, which lets you easily swap between styles of semi-permanent AUS-8 steel blades. Unlike the original Piranta line, REDI blades are designed for extended use and abuse, and can even be re-sharpened. The REDI is also the first Havalon to have spring assist for smooth, one hand opening, further proving that it is REDI for any adventure.

REDI
EVERYDAY CARRY
— BY —
HAVALON
KNIVES

float like a butterfly, *sting* like a Manbug



the
MANBUG™ Wharncliffe

PHENOMENAL CUTTING POWER,
in an Itty Bitty pocket space.

Available in multiple edge configurations and blade coatings.

1.97" BLADE
4.47" KNIFE

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